MARVEL™
GREAT FREE GIFT ISSUE!
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THE TRANSFORMERS™
HEROIC AUTOBOT
HOME, SWEET HOME..!
YOUR FREE GALVATRON BADGE!

TRANSFORMERS™

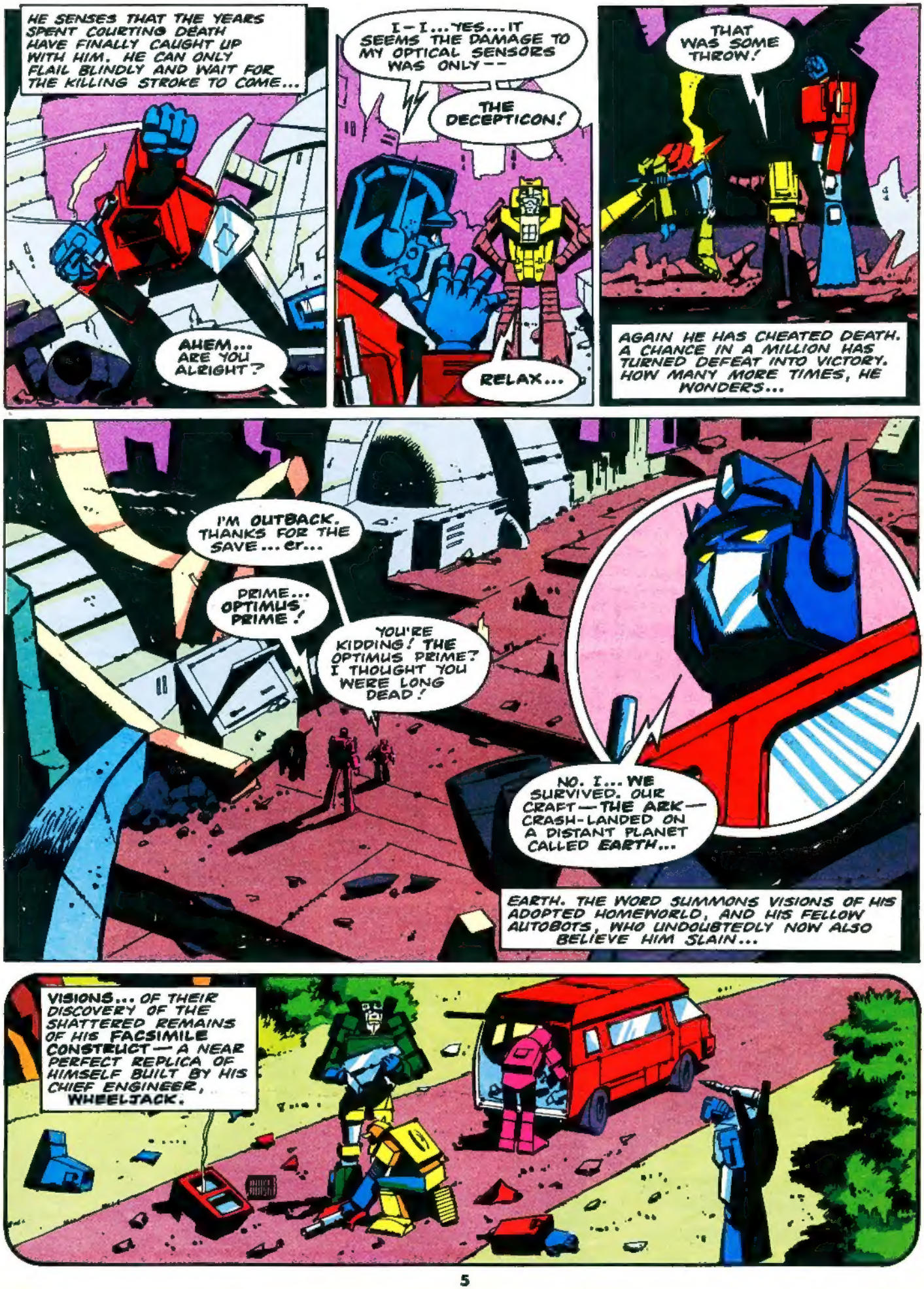
HE CANNOT BELIEVE HOW MUCH IT HAS CHANGED!
HIS HOMEWORLD, HIS BELOVED CYBERTRON, IS NOW A DESOLATE METAL WASTELAND, ITS SKY POLLUTED BY THE STENCH OF A THOUSAND BATTLES.

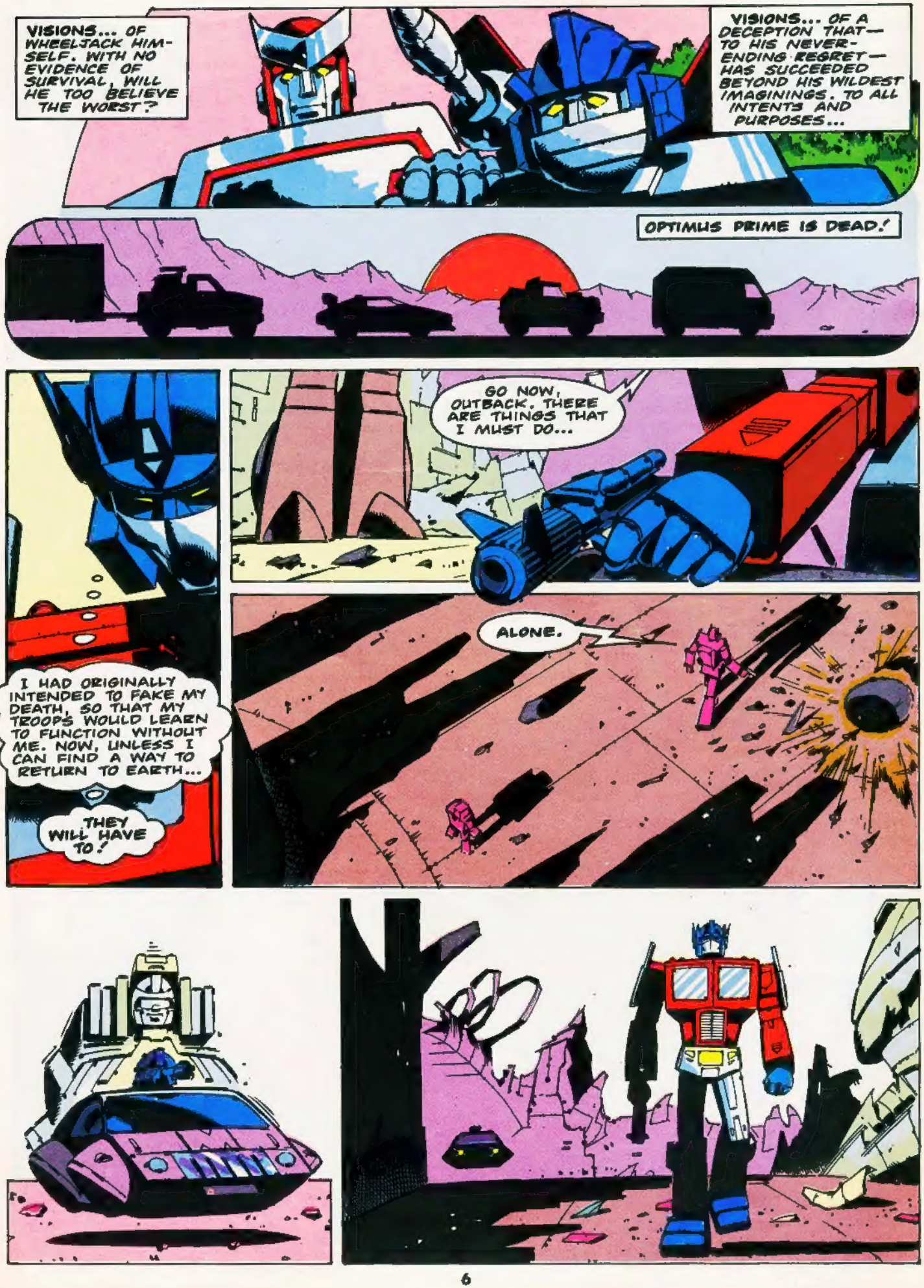
TOWERING CITIES HAVE BEEN LEVELLED, ONCE PROUD AUTOBOTS GROUND BENEATH THE BOOT OF OPPRESSION. THIS IS NOT THE WORLD HE ONCE KNEW.

SOME THINGS, HOWEVER, NEVER CHANGE!
LIKE JACKALS, YOU DECEPTICONS PREY ON THE WEAK OR THE SMALL!
WHO?!
PERHAPS YOU WOULD LIKE TO TRY YOUR LUCK WITH ME?

SCRIPT-SIMON FURMAN, ART-GEOFF SENIOR, LETTERS—A. HALFACREE, COLOUR-STEVE WHITE, EDITOR-IAN RIMMER.

HAH! AND YOU'RE BIG ENOUGH TO TEACH ME THE ERROR OF MY WAYS, EH?
WELL, FORGET IT! IN MY EXPERIENCE, THE BIGGER THEY ARE --
THAK!
THE HARDER THEY DIE?
IT HAS CERTAINLY BEEN SO IN MY EXPERIENCE. I, WHO HAVE SEEN MY AUTOBOT BRETHREN FALL AROUND ME, HAVE CHEATED DEATH ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION. THIS WARPED GOOD FORTUNE OF MINE --
JUST RAN OUT!
FRY, AUTOBOT!
SHAAAR
REAGH!
NNUUH... C-CURSE YOU!
HIS DECEPTICON ENEMIES HAVE GROWN POWERFUL IN HIS ABSENCE, WHILE HE — IT WOULD SEEM — HAS GROWN CARELESS!

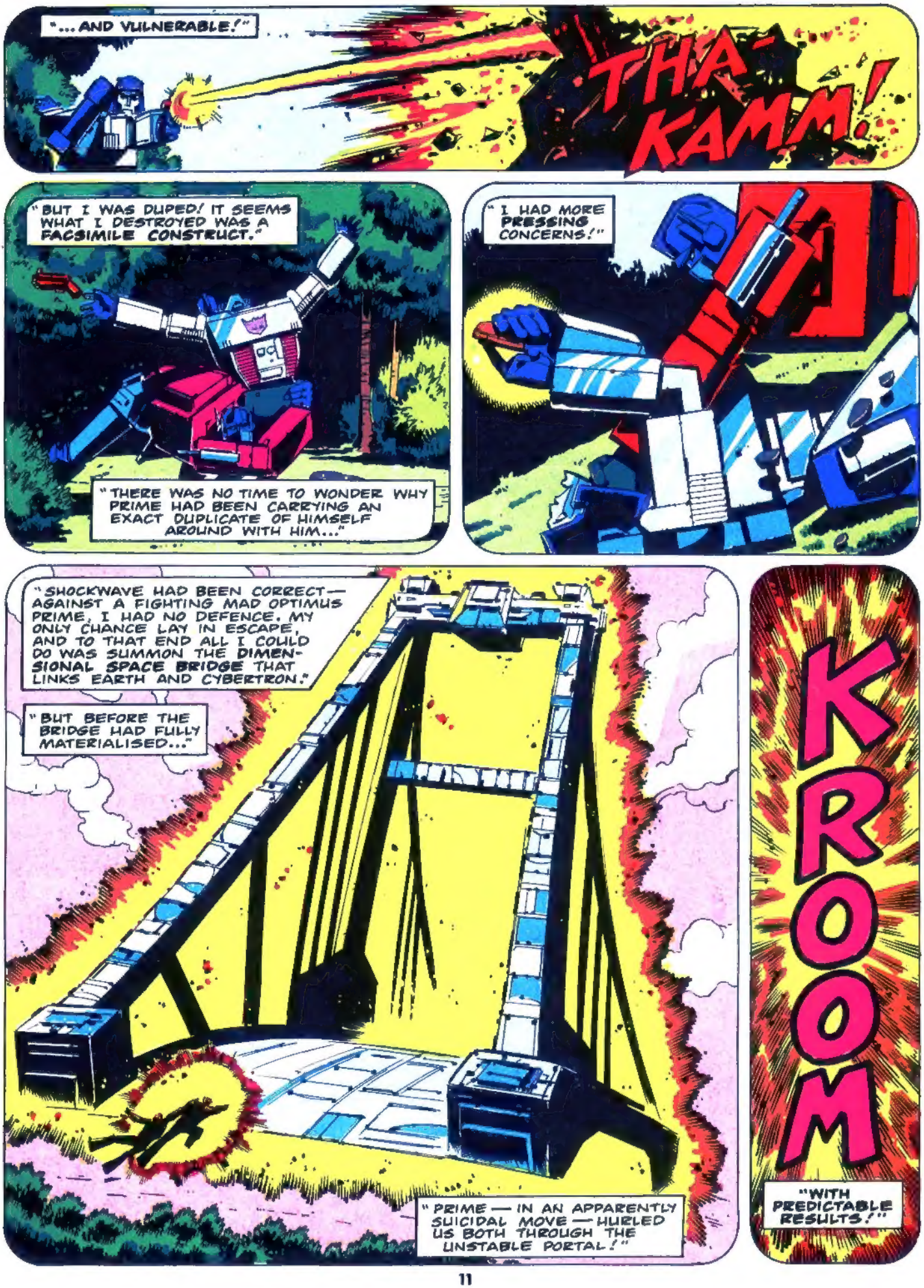

HE SENSES THAT THE YEARS SPENT COURTING DEATH HAVE FINALLY CAUGHT UP WITH HIM. HE CAN ONLY FLAIL BLINDLY AND WAIT FOR THE KILLING STROKE TO COME...
AHEM... ARE YOU ALRIGHT?
I-I...YES...IT SEEMS THE DAMAGE TO MY OPTICAL SENSORS WAS ONLY--
THE DECEPTICON!
RELAX...
THAT WAS SOME THROW!
AGAIN HE HAS CHEATED DEATH. A CHANCE IN A MILLION HAS TURNED DEFEAT INTO VICTORY. HOW MANY MORE TIMES, HE WONDERS...
I'M OUTBACK. THANKS FOR THE SAVE... er...
PRIME... OPTIMUS PRIME!
YOU'RE KIDDING! THE OPTIMUS PRIME? I THOUGHT YOU WERE LONG DEAD!
NO. I... WE SURVIVED. OUR CRAFT—THE ARK—CRASH-LANDED ON A DISTANT PLANET CALLED EARTH...
EARTH. THE WORD SUMMONS VISIONS OF HIS ADOPTED HOMEWORLD, AND HIS FELLOW AUTOBOTS, WHO UNDOUBTEDLY NOW ALSO BELIEVE HIM SLAIN...
VISIONS... OF THEIR DISCOVERY OF THE SHATTERED REMAINS OF HIS FACSIMILE CONSTRUCT—A NEAR PERFECT REPLICA OF HIMSELF BUILT BY HIS CHIEF ENGINEER, WHEELJACK.

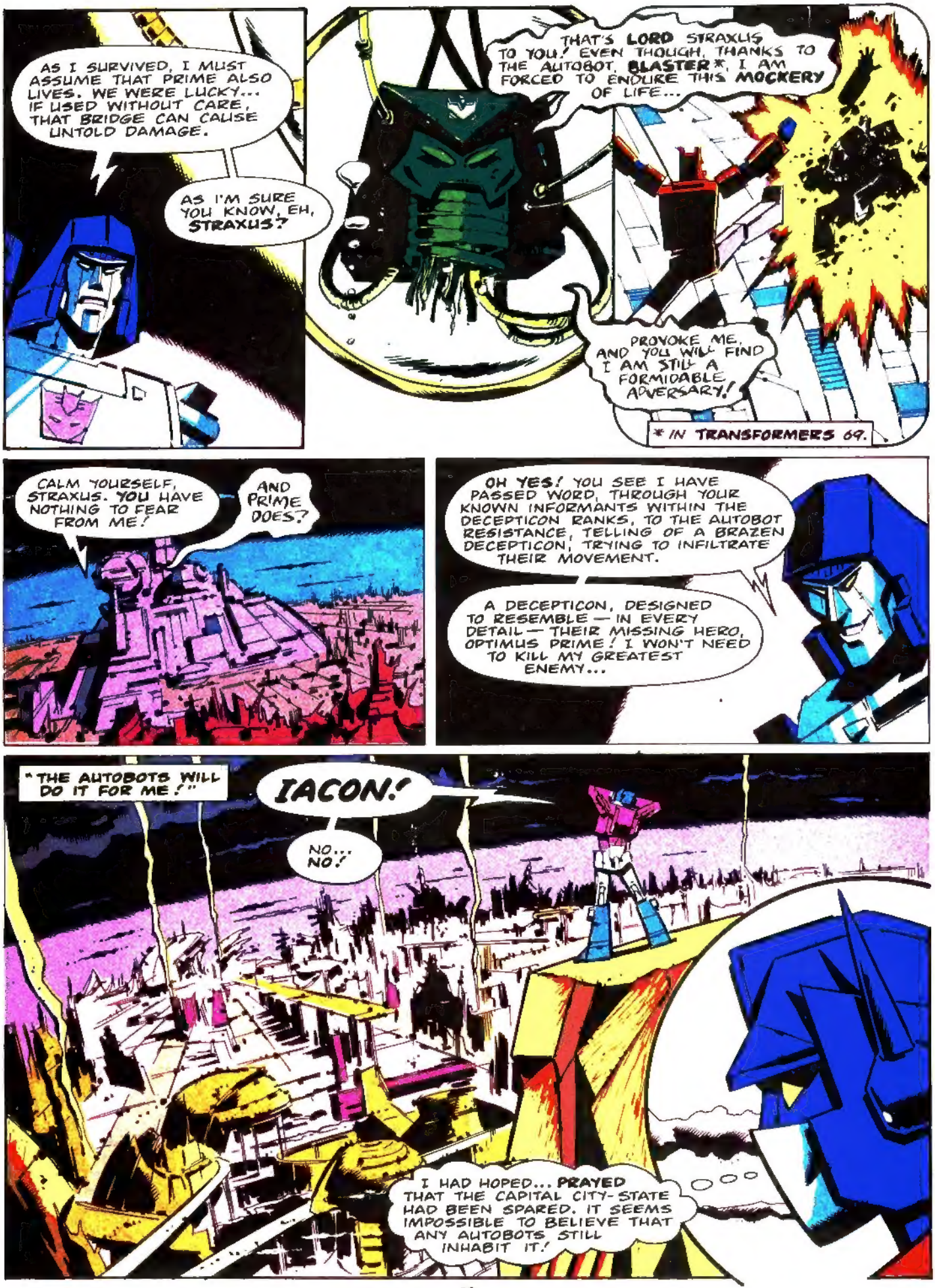

VISIONS... OF WHEELJACK HIMSELF. WITH NO EVIDENCE OF SURVIVAL, WILL HE TOO BELIEVE THE WORST?
VISIONS... OF A DECEPTION THAT— TO HIS NEVER-ENDING REGRET— HAS SUCCEEDED BEYOND HIS WILDEST IMAGININGS. TO ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES...
OPTIMUS PRIME IS DEAD!
GO NOW, OUTBACK. THERE ARE THINGS THAT I MUST DO...
I HAD ORIGINALLY INTENDED TO FAKE MY DEATH, SO THAT MY TROOPS WOULD LEARN TO FUNCTION WITHOUT ME. NOW, UNLESS I CAN FIND A WAY TO RETURN TO EARTH...
THEY WILL HAVE TO!
ALONE.

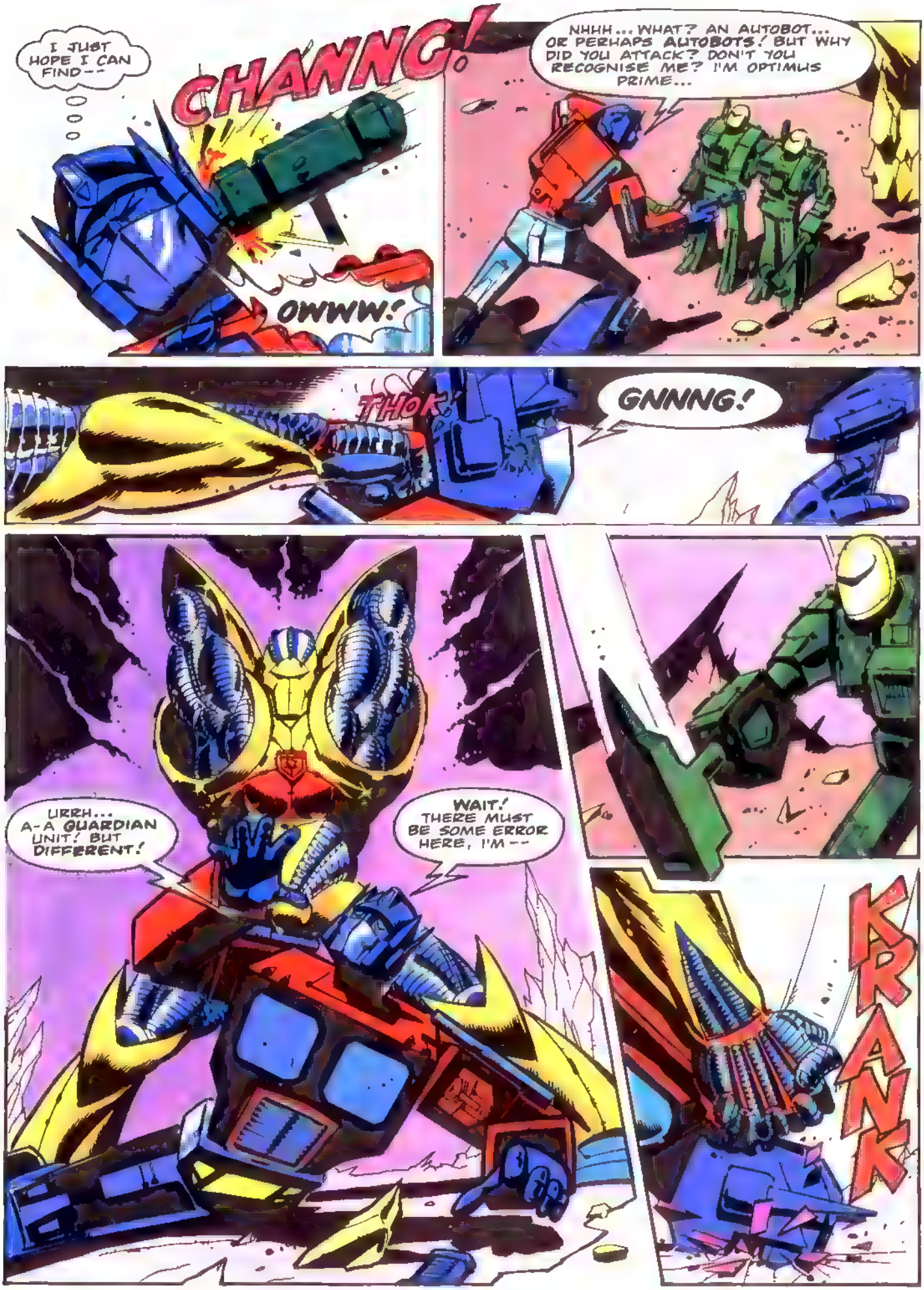
MEANWHILE, SOME WAY ACROSS CYBERTRON, IN THE REGION KNOWN AS POLYHEX...
MAGNIFICENT!
I AM PLEASED TO SEE THAT DECEPTICON STANDARDS HAVE NOT SLACKENED IN MY ABSENCE!
THE AUTOBOT ARMY IS A SHAMBLES, THEIR CITIES ARE IN RUINS, AND THEIR WILL TO FIGHT ALMOST EXTINGUISHED. MOST SATISFYING!
A PITY, REALLY, THAT YOU ARE IN NO CONDITION TO SAVOUR YOUR — AND THE DECEPTICONS' — GREATEST VICTORY!
HAVE A CARE WITH YOUR TONE, MEGATRON! THOUGH YOU MAY LEAD THE DECEPTICONS ON EARTH, I RULE HERE!
ALL YOU HAVE BROUGHT WITH YOU ON YOUR RETURN TO CYBERTRON IS TROUBLE! THE LAST THING WE NEED HERE NOW — WITH THE AUTOBOT RESISTANCE MOVEMENT SEARCHING FOR A FIGUREHEAD — IS OPTIMUS PRIME!

SILENCE! I WILL DEAL WITH OPTIMUS PRIME IN DUE COURSE!
BUT NOT, PERHAPS, BEFORE I HAVE DEALT WITH YOU, MEGATRON.
HAH! I NOTICE THAT SO FAR YOU SEEM TO HAVE HAD REMARKABLY LITTLE SUCCESS ON THAT SCORE! HIS PRESENCE ON CYBERTRON NOW, IS YET MORE EVIDENCE OF YOUR FAILURE!
THAT WAS NOT MY FAULT! I WAS BETRAYED!
I HAD HIM! HE WAS BEATEN... HELPLESS.
IT ONLY REMAINED FOR THE THRICE-CURSED PREDACONS TO FINISH THE JOB...
"A TASK RAZORCLAW AND RAMPAGE SEEMED EAGER TO CARRY OUT!"
"TOO EAGER AS IT TURNED OUT!"
"THEIR INITIAL LEAP TOOK THEM CLEAR OF PRIME..."
"AND A SECOND TOOK THEM AWAY INTO THE FOREST!"

"MY MOMENTARY SHOCK ALLOWED TANTRUM AND HEADSTRONG TO STUN ME..."
"AND DIVEBOMB TO MAKE OFF WITH MY FUSION CANNON!"
"SINCE MY ARRIVAL HERE ON CYBERTRON I HAVE RECOVERED ANOTHER - BUT BY THE TIME I HAD RECOVERED MY SENSES AFTER THE PREDACON ASSAULT ON EARTH, PRIME HAD FLED."
"THE WHOLE THING SMACKED OF A SHOCKWAVE SET-UP. NO DOUBT HIS CONFOUNDED, TWISTED LOGIC FAVOURED AN OPTIMUS PRIME VICTORY IN A ONE-ON-ONE, UNARMED COMBAT SITUATION SUCH AS THIS. WITH ME GONE, SHOCKWAVE WOULD BE FREE TO USURP MY COMMAND."
"I TRACKED PRIME THROUGH THE FOREST, ONLY TO DISCOVER THAT HE HAD DOUBLED BACK ON ME."
"I FOUND HIM WITH HIS TRAILER SECTION — IN THE OPEN, EXPOSED..."
"THANKFULLY, I ALWAYS CARRY AN EQUALISER FOR JUST THAT SORT OF OCCASION!"


"...AND VULNERABLE!"
THA-KAMM!
"BUT I WAS DUPED! IT SEEMS WHAT I DESTROYED WAS A FACSIMILE CONSTRUCT."
"THERE WAS NO TIME TO WONDER WHY PRIME HAD BEEN CARRYING AN EXACT DUPLICATE OF HIMSELF AROUND WITH HIM..."
"I HAD MORE PRESSING CONCERNS!"
"SHOCKWAVE HAD BEEN CORRECT— AGAINST A FIGHTING MAD OPTIMUS PRIME, I HAD NO DEFENCE. MY ONLY CHANCE LAY IN ESCAPE, AND TO THAT END ALL I COULD DO WAS SUMMON THE DIMENSIONAL SPACE BRIDGE THAT LINKS EARTH AND CYBERTRON."
"BUT BEFORE THE BRIDGE HAD FULLY MATERIALISED..."
"PRIME — IN AN APPARENTLY SUICIDAL MOVE — HURLED US BOTH THROUGH THE UNSTABLE PORTAL!"
KROOM
"WITH PREDICTABLE RESULTS!"


AS I SURVIVED, I MUST ASSUME THAT PRIME ALSO LIVES. WE WERE LUCKY... IF USED WITHOUT CARE, THAT BRIDGE CAN CAUSE UNTOLD DAMAGE.
AS I'M SURE YOU KNOW, EH, STRAXUS?
THAT'S LORD STRAXUS TO YOU! EVEN THOUGH, THANKS TO THE AUTOBOT, BLASTER*, I AM FORCED TO ENDURE THIS MOCKERY OF LIFE...
PROVOKE ME, AND YOU WILL FIND I AM STILL A FORMIDABLE ADVERSARY!
* IN TRANSFORMERS 69.
CALM YOURSELF, STRAXUS. YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR FROM ME!
AND PRIME DOES?
OH YES! YOU SEE I HAVE PASSED WORD, THROUGH YOUR KNOWN INFORMANTS WITHIN THE DECEPTICON RANKS, TO THE AUTOBOT RESISTANCE, TELLING OF A BRAZEN DECEPTICON, TRYING TO INFILTRATE THEIR MOVEMENT.
A DECEPTICON, DESIGNED TO RESEMBLE — IN EVERY DETAIL — THEIR MISSING HERO, OPTIMUS PRIME! I WON'T NEED TO KILL MY GREATEST ENEMY...
"THE AUTOBOTS WILL DO IT FOR ME!"
IACON!
NO... NO!
I HAD HOPED... PRAYED THAT THE CAPITAL CITY-STATE HAD BEEN SPARED. IT SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE TO BELIEVE THAT ANY AUTOBOTS STILL INHABIT IT.


I JUST HOPE I CAN FIND--
CHANNG!
OWWW!
NHHH... WHAT? AN AUTOBOT... OR PERHAPS AUTOBOTS! BUT WHY DID YOU ATTACK? DON'T YOU RECOGNISE ME? I'M OPTIMUS PRIME...
THOK!
GNNNG!
URRH... A-A GUARDIAN UNIT! BUT DIFFERENT!
WAIT! THERE MUST BE SOME ERROR HERE, I'M --
KRANK

FOR LONG, PLEASANT MOMENTS HIS MIND WANDERS ONCE MORE THROUGH THE GLOWING, GOLDEN STREETS OF IACON. HIS WORLD IS AT PEACE.
HE REMEMBERS A TIME WHEN HIS THOUGHTS TURNED ONLY TO LIFE, NEVER TO DEATH.
BUT — AS CONSCIOUSNESS DRAGS HIM SCREAMING FROM HIS PAST — HE REALISES, WITH DREADFUL CERTAINTY...
THAT HAS ALL CHANGED!
DECEPTICON — THE CHARGES ARE SPYING AND IMPERSONATING OUR GREATEST WARRIOR.
THE VERDICT OF THIS COURT IS GUILTY!
THE SENTENCE IS DEATH!
AND THE WRECKERS WILL BE ONLY TOO PLEASED TO CARRY IT OUT.'

NEXT: UNDER FIRE!

MARVEL

GREAT FREE GIFT ISSUE!

7th Feb 87
No99 32p

THE TRANSFORMERS

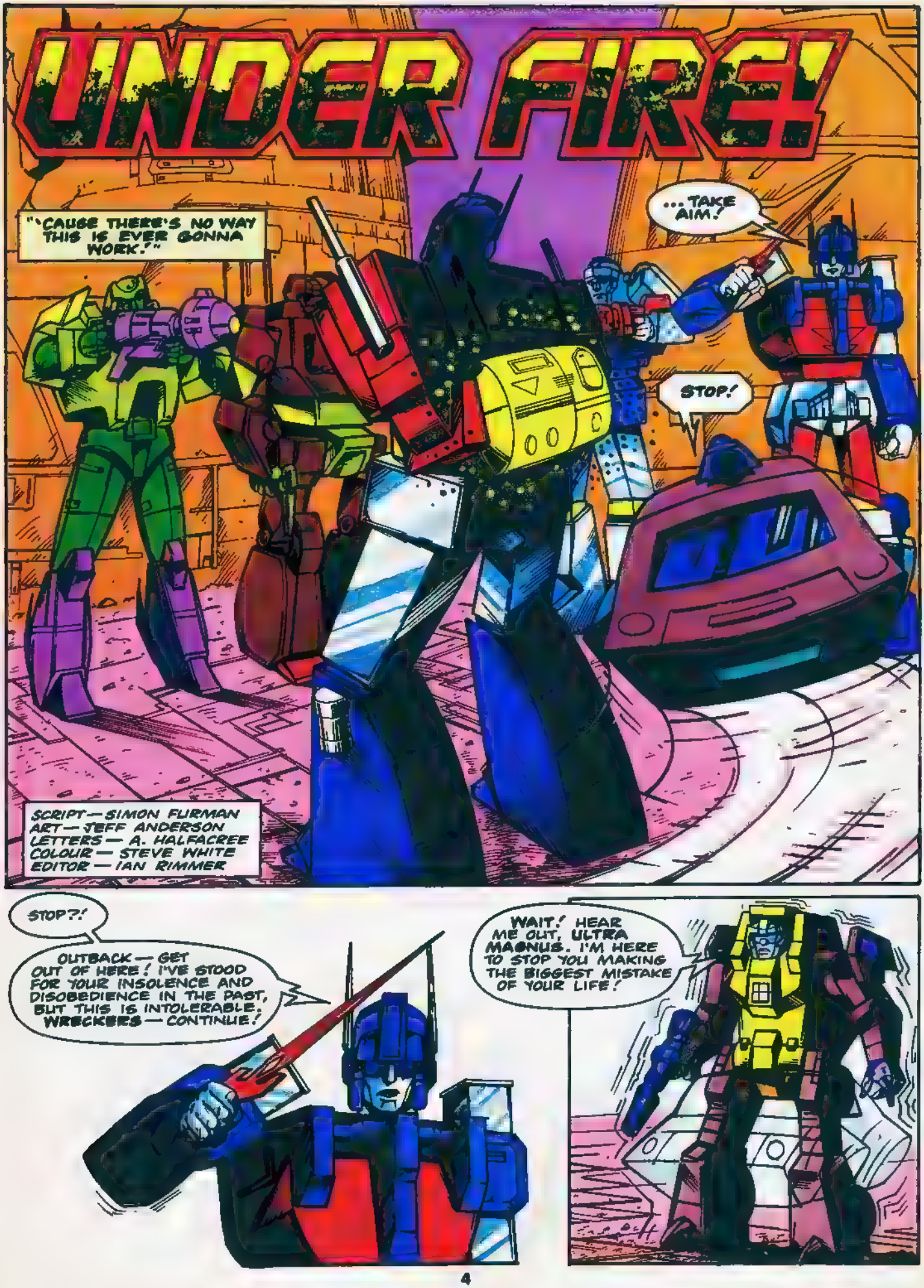
HEROIC AUTOBOT

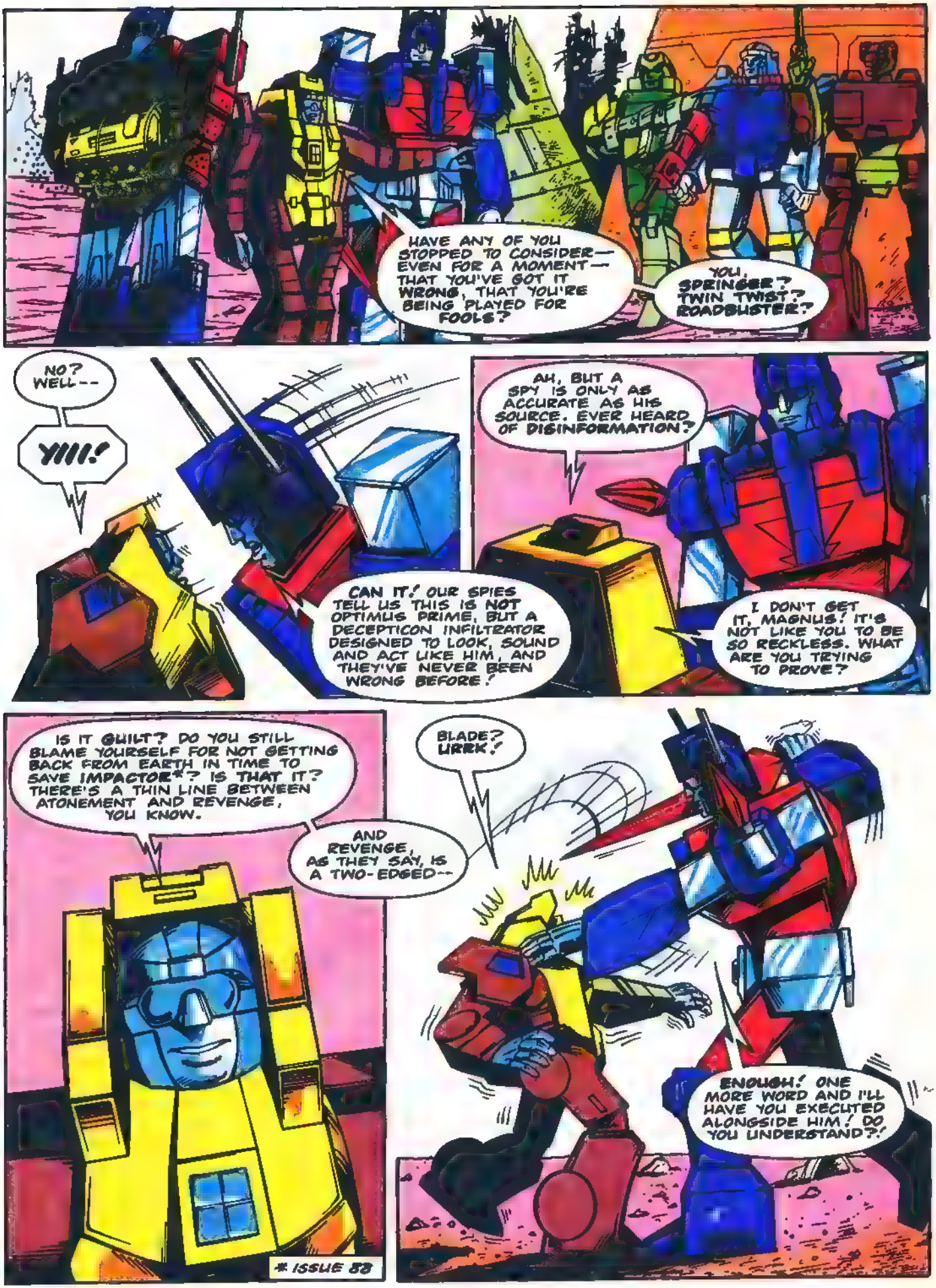
ANY LAST REQUESTS, PRISONER.

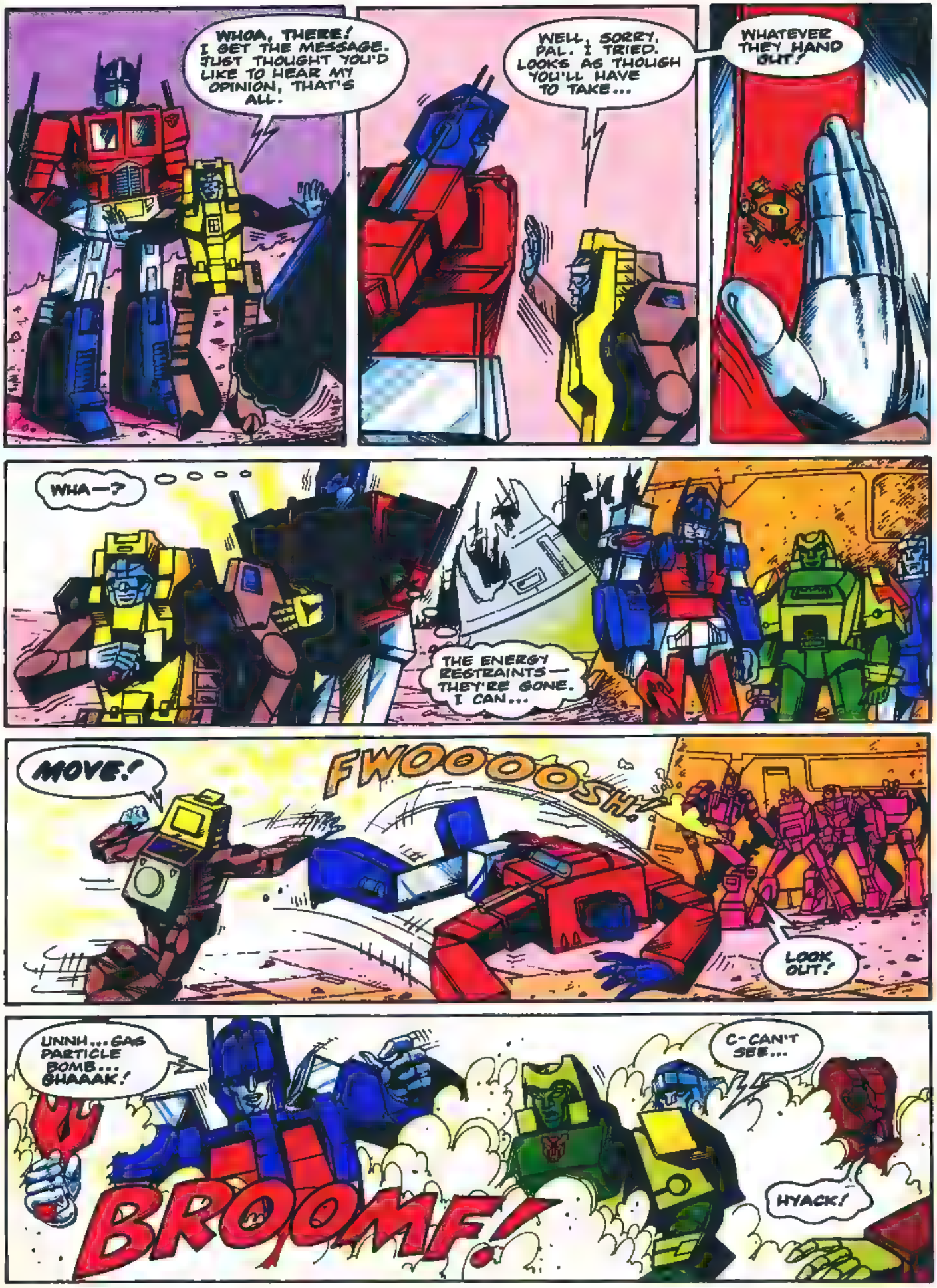
YOUR FREE ULTRA MAGNUS BADGE!

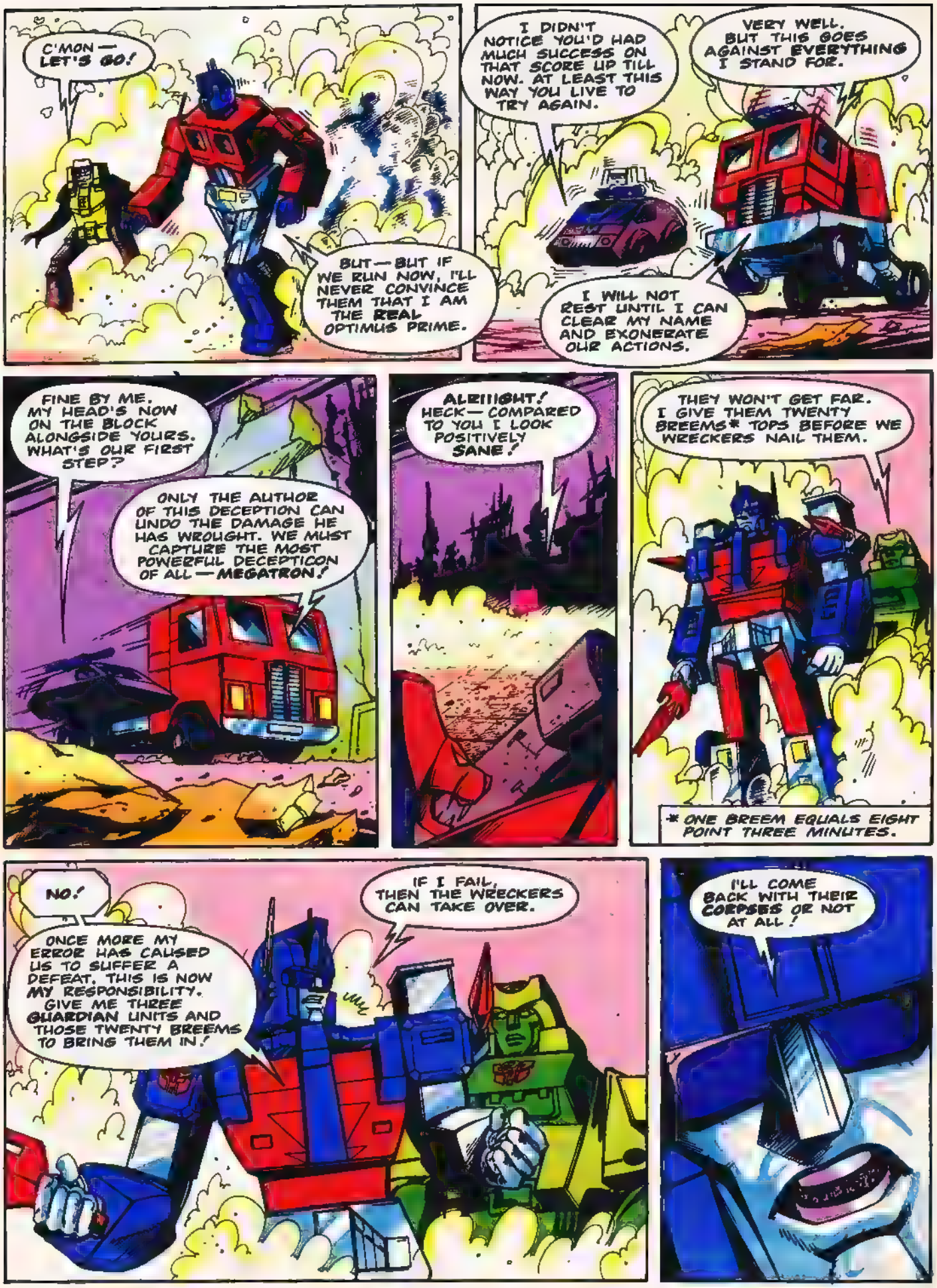
TRANSFORMERS™

"I'M GONNA DIE THIS TIME... I KNOW IT."
"ALL MY LIFE I'VE DONE THINGS MY WAY — IGNORED THE RULES, THE ORDERS. MY FELLOW AUTOBOTS HATE ME FOR IT, BUT I COULDN'T CARE LESS."
"THEY JUST CAN'T SEE THAT I'VE GOT NOTHING TO LOSE. SOME AUTOBOTS RUN OUT OF LUCK... I WAS OUT OF LUCK ON MY CREATION DAY!"
"THAT'S ME ALRIGHT. OUTBACK — THE ONLY AUTOBOT BORN TO BE A CASUALTY!"
"SOMEHOW I'VE MADE IT THIS FAR, RISKING MY NECK AGAINST MORE POWERFUL FOES AND SUPERIOR NUMBERS. DUMB, THE OTHER AUTOBOTS CALL IT. THEY'RE PROBABLY RIGHT."
"THIS IS CERTAINLY MY DUMBEST YET!"
"IT'S NOT EVEN THAT I'M DOING THIS BECAUSE THE GUY SAVED MY LIFE. OR BECAUSE I RECKON HE IS THE REAL OPTIMUS PRIME, AND NOT A DECEPTICON SPY DESIGNED TO LOOK LIKE HIM."
"NO. IT'S BECAUSE FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER I FEEL A KINSHIP WITH SOMEONE. WE'VE BOTH COURTED THE REAPER FOR SO LONG NOW, DEATH NO LONGER HOLDS ANY FEAR FOR US."
"JUST AS WELL..."


UNDER FIRE!
"'CAUSE THERE'S NO WAY THIS IS EVER GONNA WORK!"
...TAKE AIM!
STOP!
SCRIPT — SIMON FURMAN
ART — JEFF ANDERSON
LETTERS — A. HALFACREE
COLOUR — STEVE WHITE
EDITOR — IAN RIMMER
STOP?!
OUTBACK — GET OUT OF HERE! I'VE STOOD FOR YOUR INSOLENCE AND DISOBEDIENCE IN THE PAST, BUT THIS IS INTOLERABLE. WRECKERS — CONTINUE!
WAIT! HEAR ME OUT, ULTRA MAGNUS. I'M HERE TO STOP YOU MAKING THE BIGGEST MISTAKE OF YOUR LIFE!


HAVE ANY OF YOU STOPPED TO CONSIDER— EVEN FOR A MOMENT— THAT YOU'VE GOT IT WRONG, THAT YOU'RE BEING PLAYED FOR FOOLS?
YOU, SPRINGER? TWIN TWIST? ROADBUSTER?
NO? WELL--
YIII!
CAN IT! OUR SPIES TELL US THIS IS NOT OPTIMUS PRIME, BUT A DECEPTICON INFILTRATOR DESIGNED TO LOOK, SOUND AND ACT LIKE HIM, AND THEY'VE NEVER BEEN WRONG BEFORE!
AH, BUT A SPY IS ONLY AS ACCURATE AS HIS SOURCE. EVER HEARD OF DISINFORMATION?
I DON'T GET IT, MAGNUS! IT'S NOT LIKE YOU TO BE SO RECKLESS. WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO PROVE?
IS IT GUILT? DO YOU STILL BLAME YOURSELF FOR NOT GETTING BACK FROM EARTH IN TIME TO SAVE IMPACTOR*? IS THAT IT? THERE'S A THIN LINE BETWEEN ATONEMENT AND REVENGE, YOU KNOW.
AND REVENGE, AS THEY SAY, IS A TWO-EDGED--
BLADE? URRK!
ENOUGH! ONE MORE WORD AND I'LL HAVE YOU EXECUTED ALONGSIDE HIM! DO YOU UNDERSTAND?!
* ISSUE 88

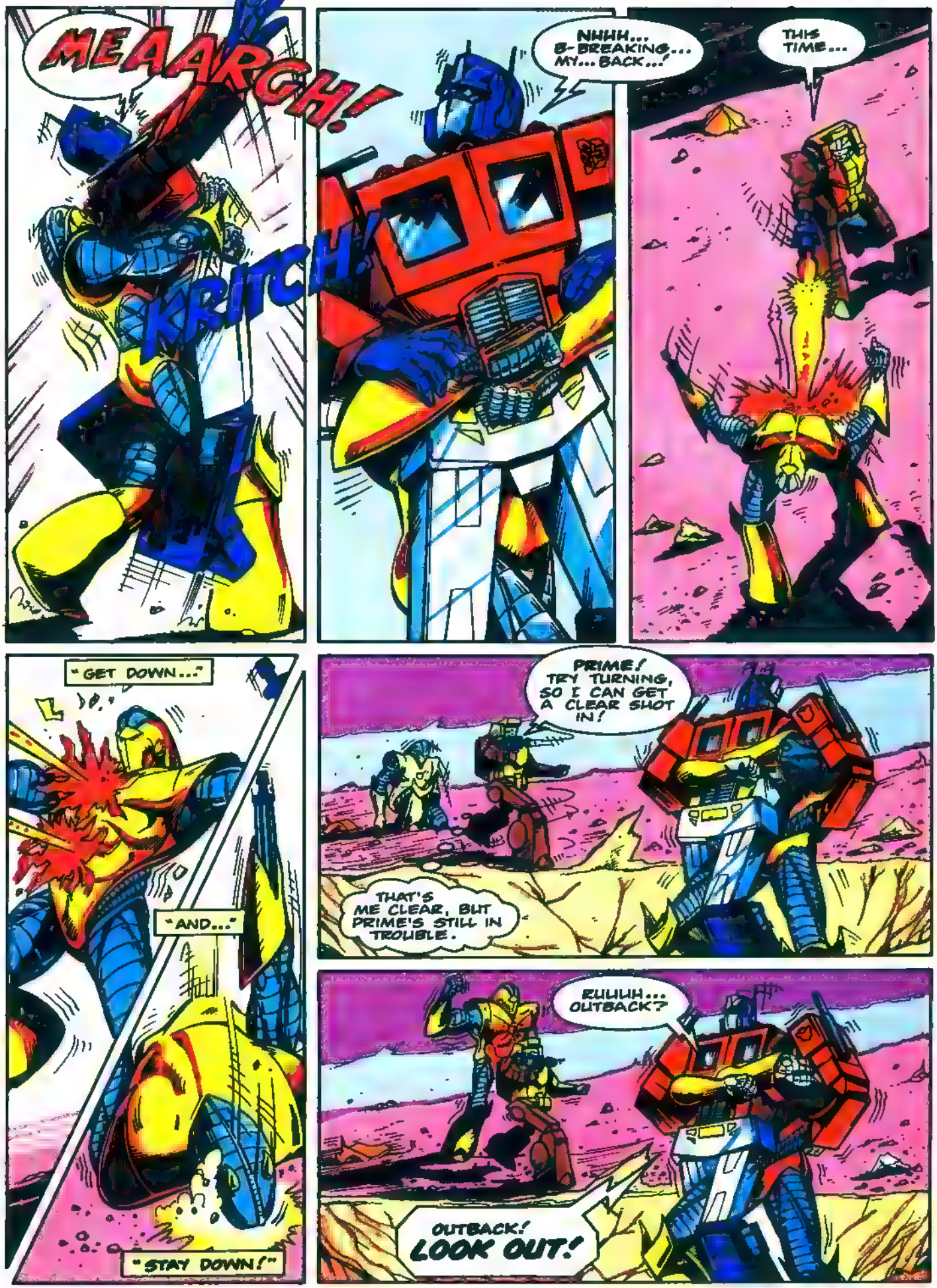

WHOA, THERE! I GET THE MESSAGE. JUST THOUGHT YOU'D LIKE TO HEAR MY OPINION, THAT'S ALL.
WELL, SORRY, PAL. I TRIED. LOOKS AS THOUGH YOU'LL HAVE TO TAKE...
WHATEVER THEY HAND OUT!
WHA—?
THE ENERGY RESTRAINTS— THEY'RE GONE. I CAN...
MOVE!
FWOOOOSH!
LOOK OUT!
UNNH... GAS PARTICLE BOMB... GHAAAK!
BROOMF!
C-CAN'T SEE...
HYACK!

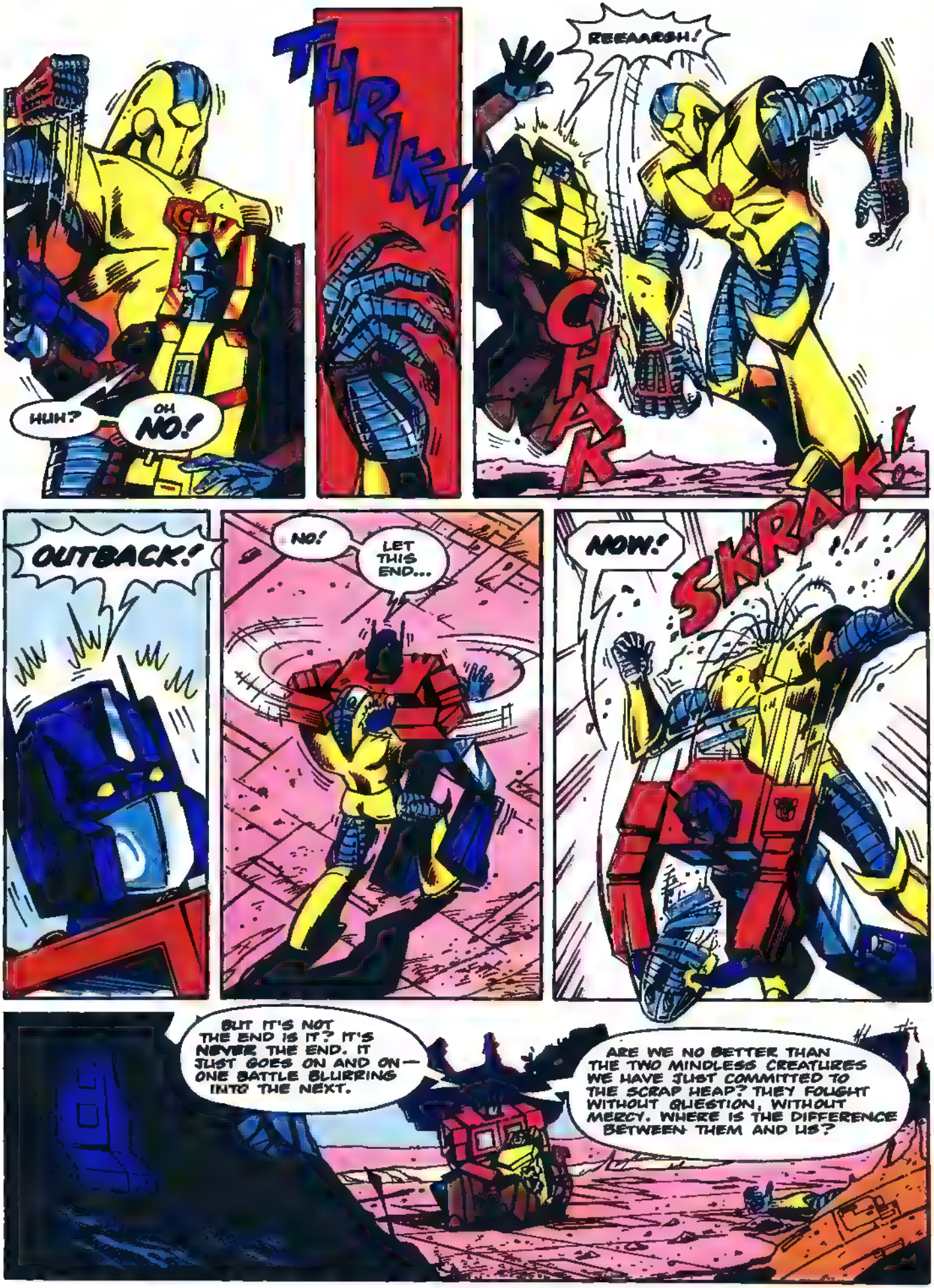

C'MON — LET'S GO!
BUT — BUT IF WE RUN NOW, I'LL NEVER CONVINCE THEM THAT I AM THE REAL OPTIMUS PRIME.
I DIDN'T NOTICE YOU'D HAD MUCH SUCCESS ON THAT SCORE UP TILL NOW. AT LEAST THIS WAY YOU LIVE TO TRY AGAIN.
VERY WELL. BUT THIS GOES AGAINST EVERYTHING I STAND FOR.
I WILL NOT REST UNTIL I CAN CLEAR MY NAME AND EXONERATE OUR ACTIONS.
FINE BY ME. MY HEAD'S NOW ON THE BLOCK ALONGSIDE YOURS. WHAT'S OUR FIRST STEP?
ONLY THE AUTHOR OF THIS DECEPTION CAN UNDO THE DAMAGE HE HAS WROUGHT. WE MUST CAPTURE THE MOST POWERFUL DECEPTICON OF ALL — MEGATRON!
ALRIIIGHT! HECK — COMPARED TO YOU I LOOK POSITIVELY SANE!
THEY WON'T GET FAR. I GIVE THEM TWENTY BREEMS* TOPS BEFORE WE WRECKERS NAIL THEM.
* ONE BREEM EQUALS EIGHT POINT THREE MINUTES.
NO!
ONCE MORE MY ERROR HAS CAUSED US TO SUFFER A DEFEAT. THIS IS NOW MY RESPONSIBILITY. GIVE ME THREE GUARDIAN UNITS AND THOSE TWENTY BREEMS TO BRING THEM IN!
IF I FAIL, THEN THE WRECKERS CAN TAKE OVER.
I'LL COME BACK WITH THEIR CORPSES OR NOT AT ALL!

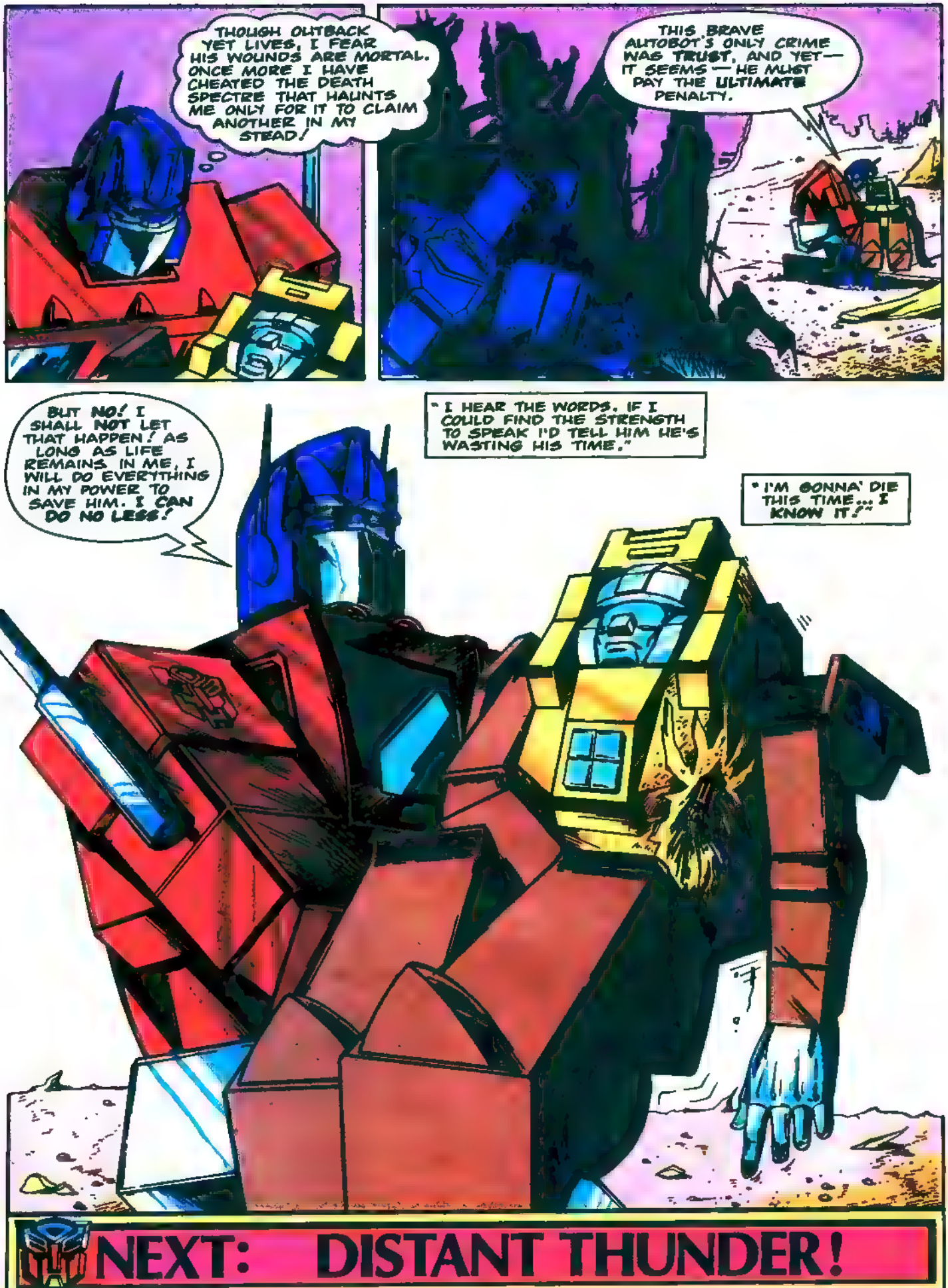
THE DECEPTICON STRONGHOLD IN POLYHEX, A SHORT WHILE LATER...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, ESCAPED?!
EXPLAIN YOURSELF, RATBAT!
WHAT IS THERE TO EXPLAIN? I SAW YOUR PLAN FAIL. PRIME, WITH THE HELP OF OUTBACK, ESCAPED HIS DEATH SENTENCE.
ANY ATTEMPT BY ME TO STOP THEM WOULD MERELY HAVE VALIDATED PRIME'S CLAIMS OF INNOCENCE.
CURSE YOU, OPTIMUS PRIME! HOW MANY TIMES? HOW MANY?!
I AM UNIMPRESSED.
I HAD SOMEHOW EXPECTED BETTER OF THE NEAR LEGENDARY MEGATRON. BUT THEN LEGENDS SO OFTEN DON'T BEAR UP TO CLOSE INSPECTION!
OH YES? AND WHAT OF YOU, 'LORD' STRAXUS?
SINCE YOUR BODY WAS DESTROYED BY THE AUTOBOT, BLASTER*, YOU EXIST ONLY BECAUSE OF THIS LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEM. IT WOULD BE LAUGHABLY SIMPLE TO CRUSH IT— AND YOU!
* ISSUE 69.
BE THANKFUL THAT I HAVE NEED OF YOU FOR THE MOMENT.
ORGANISE DECEPTICON SEARCH PARTIES AND LEAK WORD TO THE AUTOBOTS THAT WE SEEK OUR AGENT ONLY TO END HIS LIFE FOR "THIS MISERABLE FAILURE."

WITH BOTH THE AUTOBOTS AND THE DECEPTICONS SEARCHING FOR HIM, HE WON'T LAST LONG!
OUT OF MY WAY, OAF!
HOW MUCH LONGER MUST WE TOLERATE HIM? HE'S DANGEROUSLY UNSTABLE, AND LIABLE TO WRECK ALL WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED HERE.
PATIENCE, RATBAT. WE WILL CONTINUE TO DO HIS BIDDING UNTIL THE EQUIPMENT I NEED HAS BEEN ASSEMBLED.
THEN, WHEN MEGATRON LEAST SUSPECTS IT, I WILL STRIKE...
AND LORD STRAXUS WILL TRULY LIVE AGAIN!
MEANWHILE...
STILL NO SIGN OF THEM. STRANGE, BUT NOW THAT MY ANGER'S ABATED, I FEEL ALMOST GLAD.
COULD OUTBACK HAVE BEEN RIGHT? IS GUILT CLOUDING MY JUDGEMENT? MATRIX KNOWS, I'VE CERTAINLY PUT MYSELF THROUGH THE WRINGER OVER IMPACTOR'S DEATH.
AM I USING THIS 'PRIME' AFFAIR TO SOMEHOW SALVE MY CONSCIENCE...TO MAKE AMENDS FOR MY FAILURE TO SAVE THE WRECKERS' FORMER LEADER?

I NOW WISH I HADN'T DECIDED TO SPLIT MY LITTLE SEARCH PARTY. THOUGH LOYAL, A GUARDIAN UNIT WILL TEND TO INTERPRET ORDERS...
TOO LITERALLY!
KROOM
AN EXPLOSION...
"THEY'VE FOUND THEM!"
OUTBACK— ARE YOU—?
I'M FINE...
BUT POSSIBLY NOT FOR MUCH LONGER!
OUTBACK— GO! GET OUT OF HERE!
NO WAY! I MAY BE SMALL...
BUT I PACK ONE HECK OF A PUNCH!
CHAM!
NO! LISTEN TO--


MEAARCH!
KRITCH!
NHHH... S-BREAKING... MY... BACK...'
THIS TIME...
"GET DOWN..."
"AND..."
"STAY DOWN!"
PRIME! TRY TURNING, SO I CAN GET A CLEAR SHOT IN!
THAT'S ME CLEAR, BUT PRIME'S STILL IN TROUBLE.
RUUUH... OUTBACK?
OUTBACK! LOOK OUT!


HUH?
OH NO!
THRIKT!
REEAARGH!
CHAK
OUTBACK!
NO!
LET THIS END...
NOW!
SKRAK!
BUT IT'S NOT THE END IS IT? IT'S NEVER THE END. IT JUST GOES ON AND ON— ONE BATTLE BLURRING INTO THE NEXT.
ARE WE NO BETTER THAN THE TWO MINDLESS CREATURES WE HAVE JUST COMMITTED TO THE SCRAP HEAP? THEY FOUGHT WITHOUT QUESTION, WITHOUT MERCY. WHERE IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEM AND US?


THOUGH OUTBACK YET LIVES, I FEAR HIS WOUNDS ARE MORTAL. ONCE MORE I HAVE CHEATED THE DEATH SPECTRE THAT HAUNTS ME ONLY FOR IT TO CLAIM ANOTHER IN MY STEAD!
THIS BRAVE AUTOBOT'S ONLY CRIME WAS TRUST, AND YET— IT SEEMS — HE MUST PAY THE ULTIMATE PENALTY.
BUT NO! I SHALL NOT LET THAT HAPPEN! AS LONG AS LIFE REMAINS IN ME, I WILL DO EVERYTHING IN MY POWER TO SAVE HIM. I CAN DO NO LESS!
"I HEAR THE WORDS. IF I COULD FIND THE STRENGTH TO SPEAK I'D TELL HIM HE'S WASTING HIS TIME."
"I'M GONNA' DIE THIS TIME... I KNOW IT!"
NEXT: DISTANT THUNDER!

MARVEL
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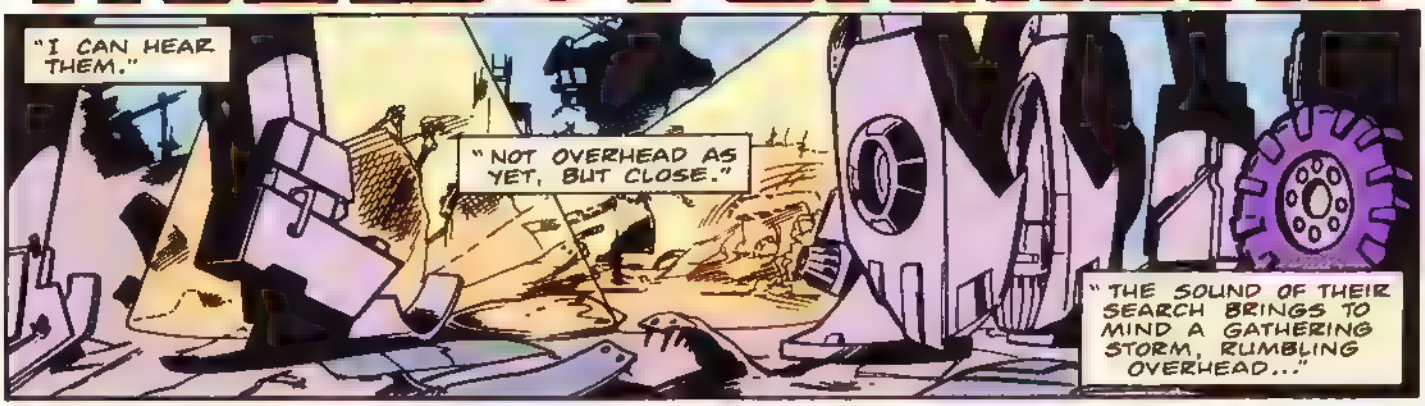
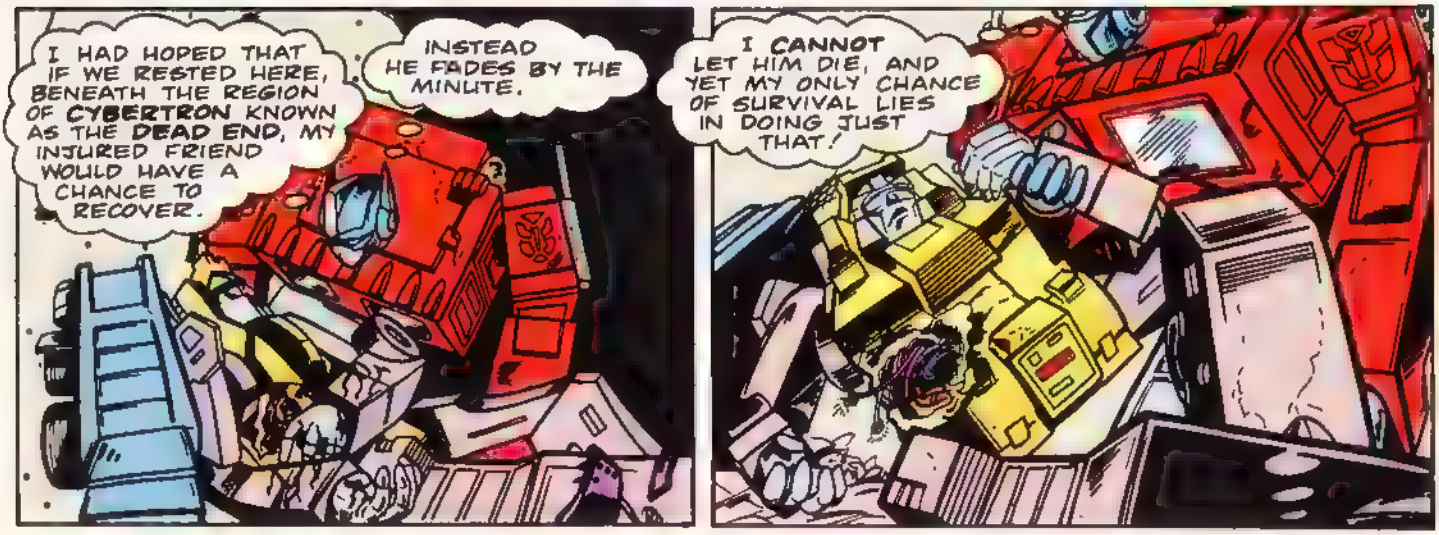
THE TRANSFORMERS™

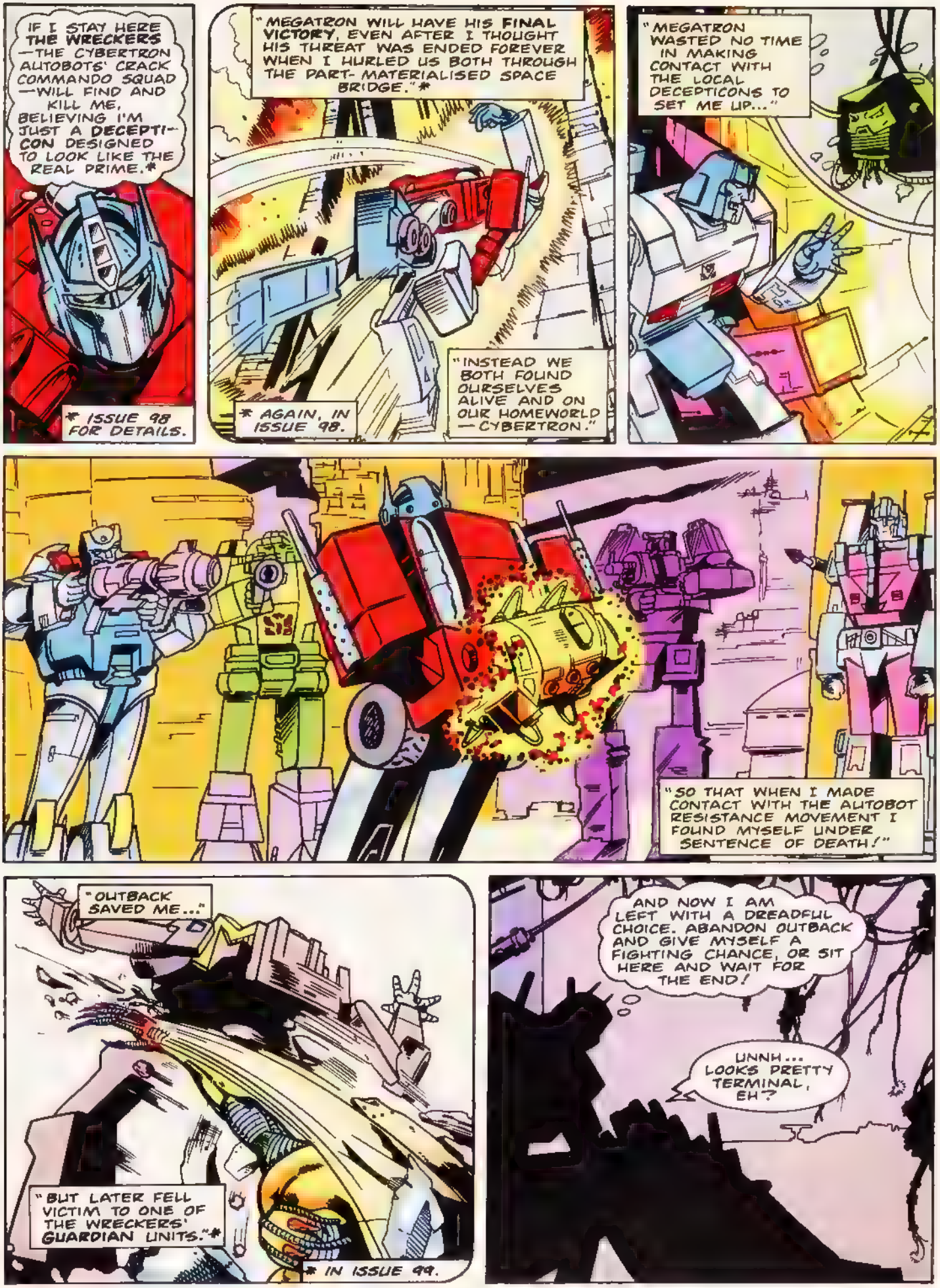
HEROIC AUTOBOT

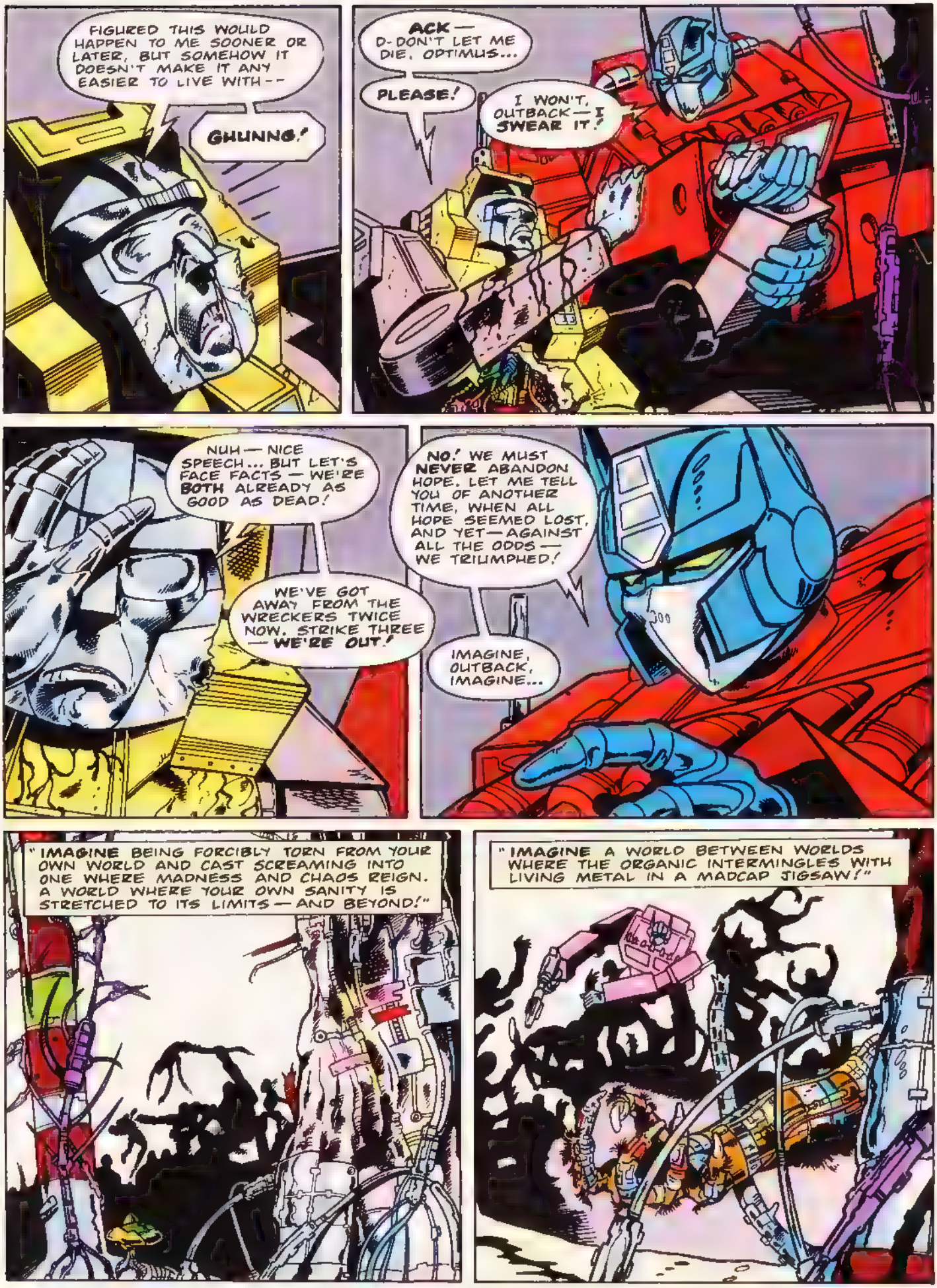
TRANSFORMERS™

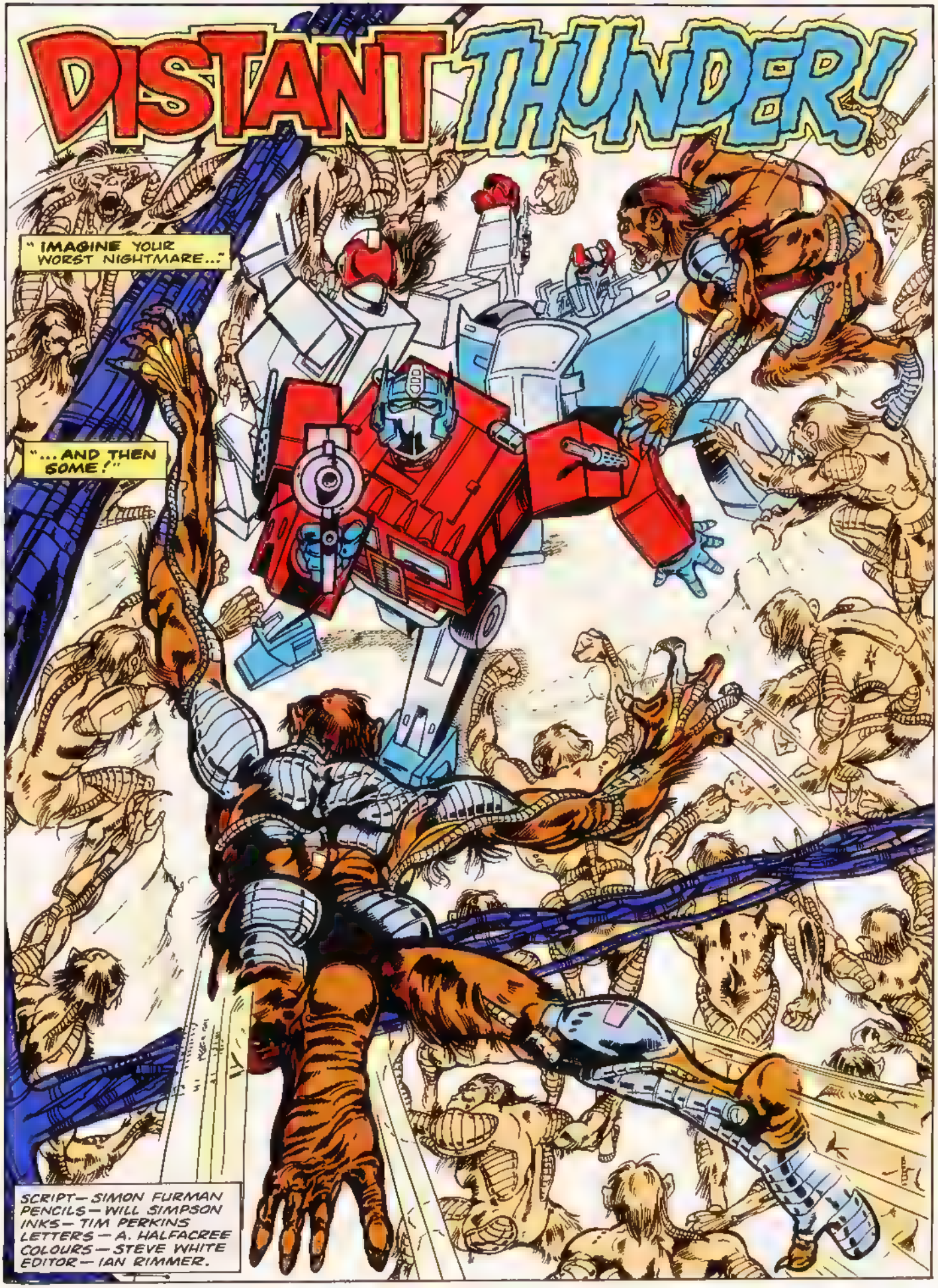

"I CAN HEAR THEM."
"NOT OVERHEAD AS YET, BUT CLOSE."
"THE SOUND OF THEIR SEARCH BRINGS TO MIND A GATHERING STORM, RUMBLING OVERHEAD..."

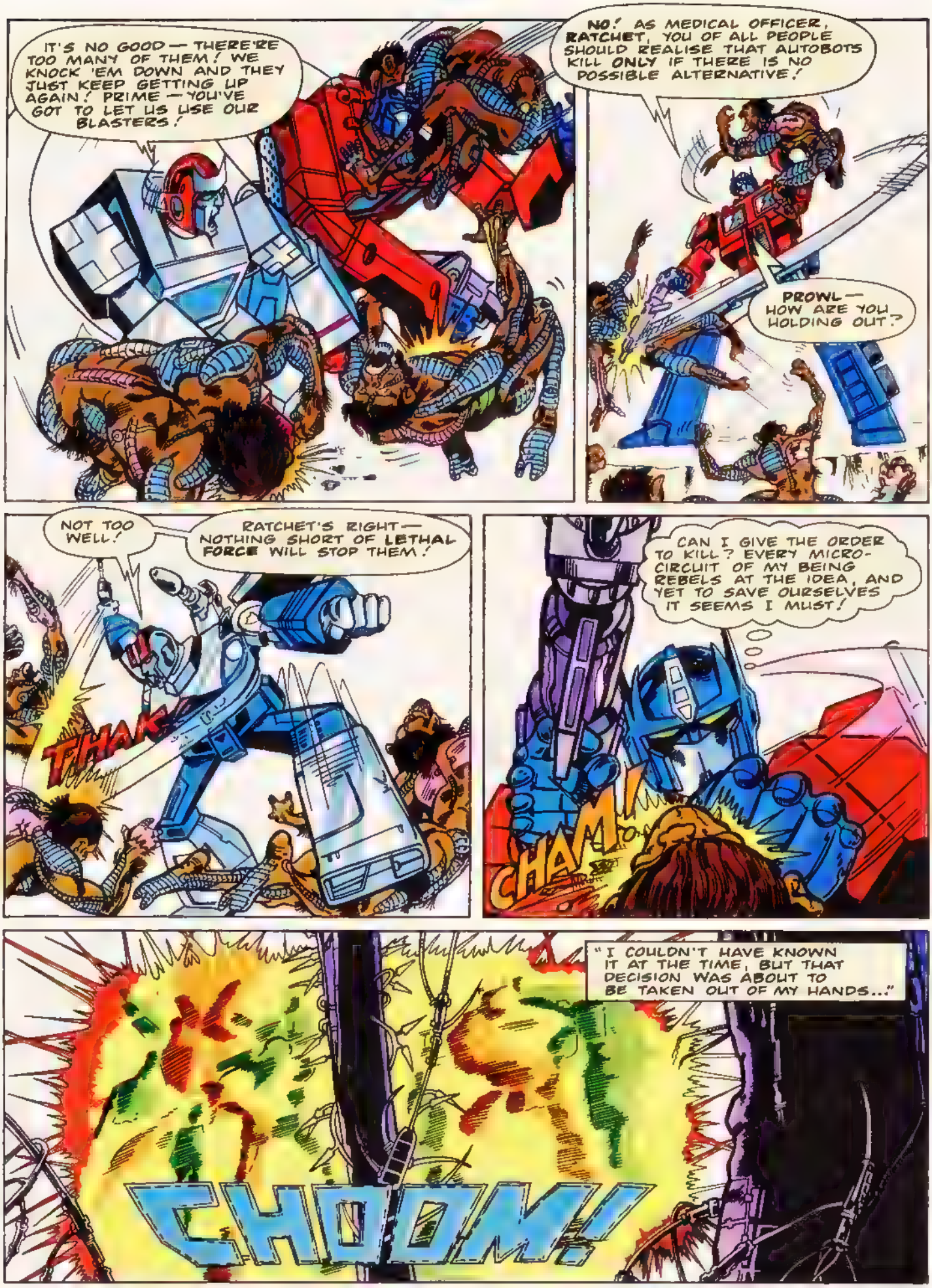
"LIKE DISTANT THUNDER!"
HOLD ON, OUTBACK... HOLD ON!
IT'S NO USE! AT THIS RATE OF FUEL LOSS I FEAR HE WILL BE DEAD WITHIN HOURS.
N-NUH... P-PRIME... HELP ME...

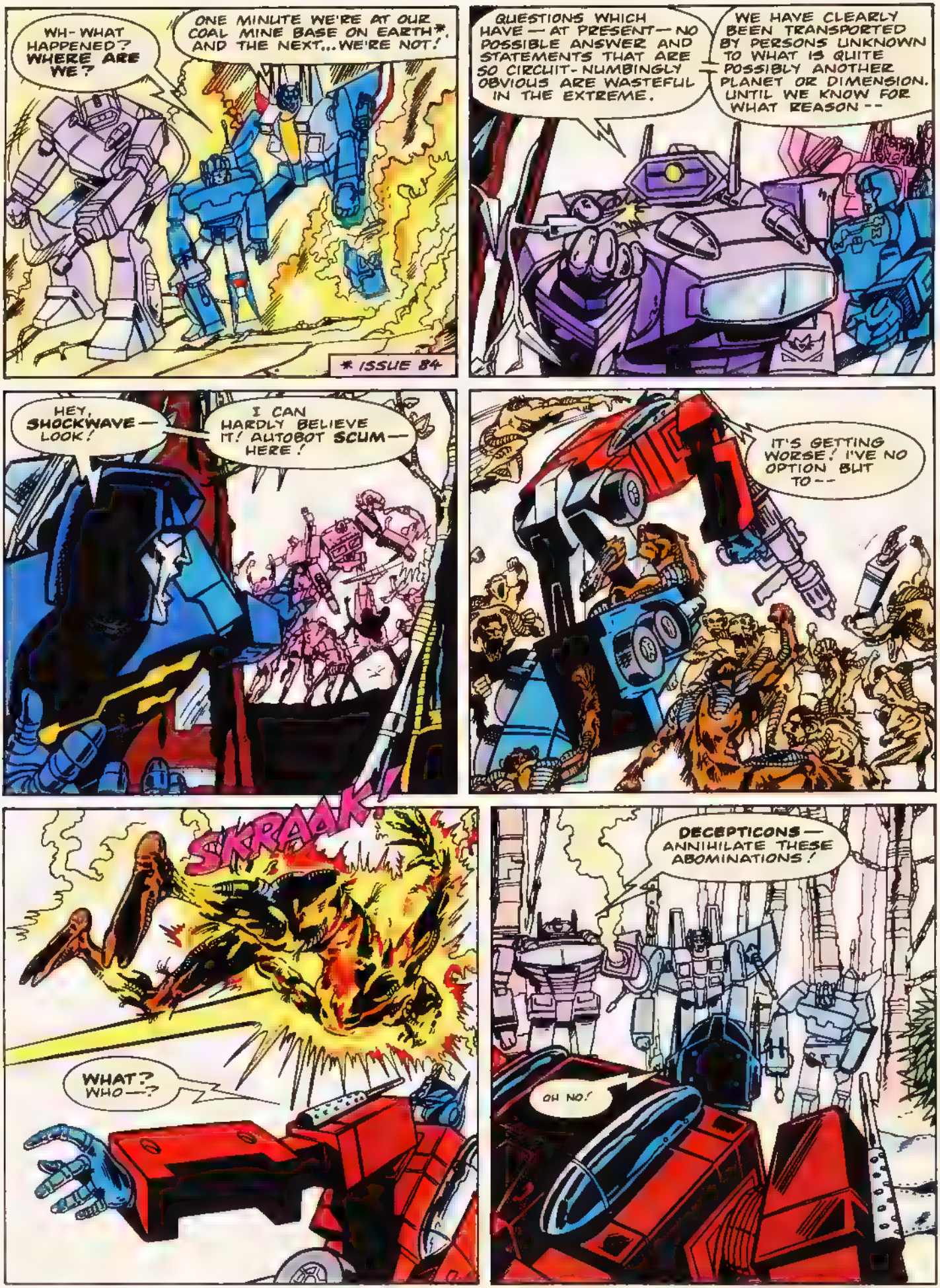

I HAD HOPED THAT IF WE RESTED HERE, BENEATH THE REGION OF CYBERTRON KNOWN AS THE DEAD END, MY INJURED FRIEND WOULD HAVE A CHANCE TO RECOVER.
INSTEAD HE FADES BY THE MINUTE.
I CANNOT LET HIM DIE, AND YET MY ONLY CHANCE OF SURVIVAL LIES IN DOING JUST THAT!


IF I STAY HERE THE WRECKERS —THE CYBERTRON AUTOBOTS' CRACK COMMANDO SQUAD —WILL FIND AND KILL ME, BELIEVING I'M JUST A DECEPTICON DESIGNED TO LOOK LIKE THE REAL PRIME.*
* ISSUE 98 FOR DETAILS.
"MEGATRON WILL HAVE HIS FINAL VICTORY, EVEN AFTER I THOUGHT HIS THREAT WAS ENDED FOREVER WHEN I HURLED US BOTH THROUGH THE PART-MATERIALISED SPACE BRIDGE."*
"INSTEAD WE BOTH FOUND OURSELVES ALIVE AND ON OUR HOMEWORLD —CYBERTRON."
* AGAIN, IN ISSUE 98.
"MEGATRON WASTED NO TIME IN MAKING CONTACT WITH THE LOCAL DECEPTICONS TO SET ME UP..."
"SO THAT WHEN I MADE CONTACT WITH THE AUTOBOT RESISTANCE MOVEMENT I FOUND MYSELF UNDER SENTENCE OF DEATH!"
"OUTBACK SAVED ME..."
"BUT LATER FELL VICTIM TO ONE OF THE WRECKERS' GUARDIAN UNITS."*
* IN ISSUE 99.
AND NOW I AM LEFT WITH A DREADFUL CHOICE. ABANDON OUTBACK AND GIVE MYSELF A FIGHTING CHANCE, OR SIT HERE AND WAIT FOR THE END!
UNNH... LOOKS PRETTY TERMINAL, EH?


FIGURED THIS WOULD HAPPEN TO ME SOONER OR LATER, BUT SOMEHOW IT DOESN'T MAKE IT ANY EASIER TO LIVE WITH--
GHUNNG!
ACK— D-DON'T LET ME DIE, OPTIMUS...
PLEASE!
I WON'T, OUTBACK— I SWEAR IT!
NUH— NICE SPEECH... BUT LET'S FACE FACTS— WE'RE BOTH ALREADY AS GOOD AS DEAD!
WE'VE GOT AWAY FROM THE WRECKERS TWICE NOW. STRIKE THREE —WE'RE OUT!
NO! WE MUST NEVER ABANDON HOPE. LET ME TELL YOU OF ANOTHER TIME, WHEN ALL HOPE SEEMED LOST, AND YET— AGAINST ALL THE ODDS— WE TRIUMPHED!
IMAGINE, OUTBACK, IMAGINE...
"IMAGINE BEING FORCIBLY TORN FROM YOUR OWN WORLD AND CAST SCREAMING INTO ONE WHERE MADNESS AND CHAOS REIGN. A WORLD WHERE YOUR OWN SANITY IS STRETCHED TO ITS LIMITS— AND BEYOND!"
"IMAGINE A WORLD BETWEEN WORLDS WHERE THE ORGANIC INTERMINGLES WITH LIVING METAL IN A MADCAP JIGSAW!"


DISTANT THUNDER!
"IMAGINE YOUR WORST NIGHTMARE..."
"...AND THEN SOME!"
SCRIPT—SIMON FURMAN
PENCILS—WILL SIMPSON
INKS—TIM PERKINS
LETTERS—A. HALFACREE
COLOURS—STEVE WHITE
EDITOR—IAN RIMMER.


IT'S NO GOOD — THERE'RE TOO MANY OF THEM! WE KNOCK 'EM DOWN AND THEY JUST KEEP GETTING UP AGAIN! PRIME — YOU'VE GOT TO LET US USE OUR BLASTERS!
NO! AS MEDICAL OFFICER, RATCHET, YOU OF ALL PEOPLE SHOULD REALISE THAT AUTOBOTS KILL ONLY IF THERE IS NO POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE!
PROWL — HOW ARE YOU HOLDING OUT?
NOT TOO WELL!
RATCHET'S RIGHT — NOTHING SHORT OF LETHAL FORCE WILL STOP THEM!
THAK
CAN I GIVE THE ORDER TO KILL? EVERY MICRO-CIRCUIT OF MY BEING REBELS AT THE IDEA, AND YET TO SAVE OURSELVES IT SEEMS I MUST!
CHAM
"I COULDN'T HAVE KNOWN IT AT THE TIME, BUT THAT DECISION WAS ABOUT TO BE TAKEN OUT OF MY HANDS..."
CHOOM!


WH-WHAT HAPPENED? WHERE ARE WE?
ONE MINUTE WE'RE AT OUR COAL MINE BASE ON EARTH*, AND THE NEXT...WE'RE NOT!
* ISSUE 84
QUESTIONS WHICH HAVE — AT PRESENT — NO POSSIBLE ANSWER AND STATEMENTS THAT ARE SO CIRCUIT-NUMBINGLY OBVIOUS ARE WASTEFUL IN THE EXTREME.
WE HAVE CLEARLY BEEN TRANSPORTED BY PERSONS UNKNOWN TO WHAT IS QUITE POSSIBLY ANOTHER PLANET OR DIMENSION. UNTIL WE KNOW FOR WHAT REASON --
HEY, SHOCKWAVE — LOOK!
I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE IT! AUTOBOT SCUM — HERE!
IT'S GETTING WORSE! I'VE NO OPTION BUT TO --
SKRAAK!
WHAT? WHO —?
DECEPTICONS — ANNIHILATE THESE ABOMINATIONS!
OH NO!

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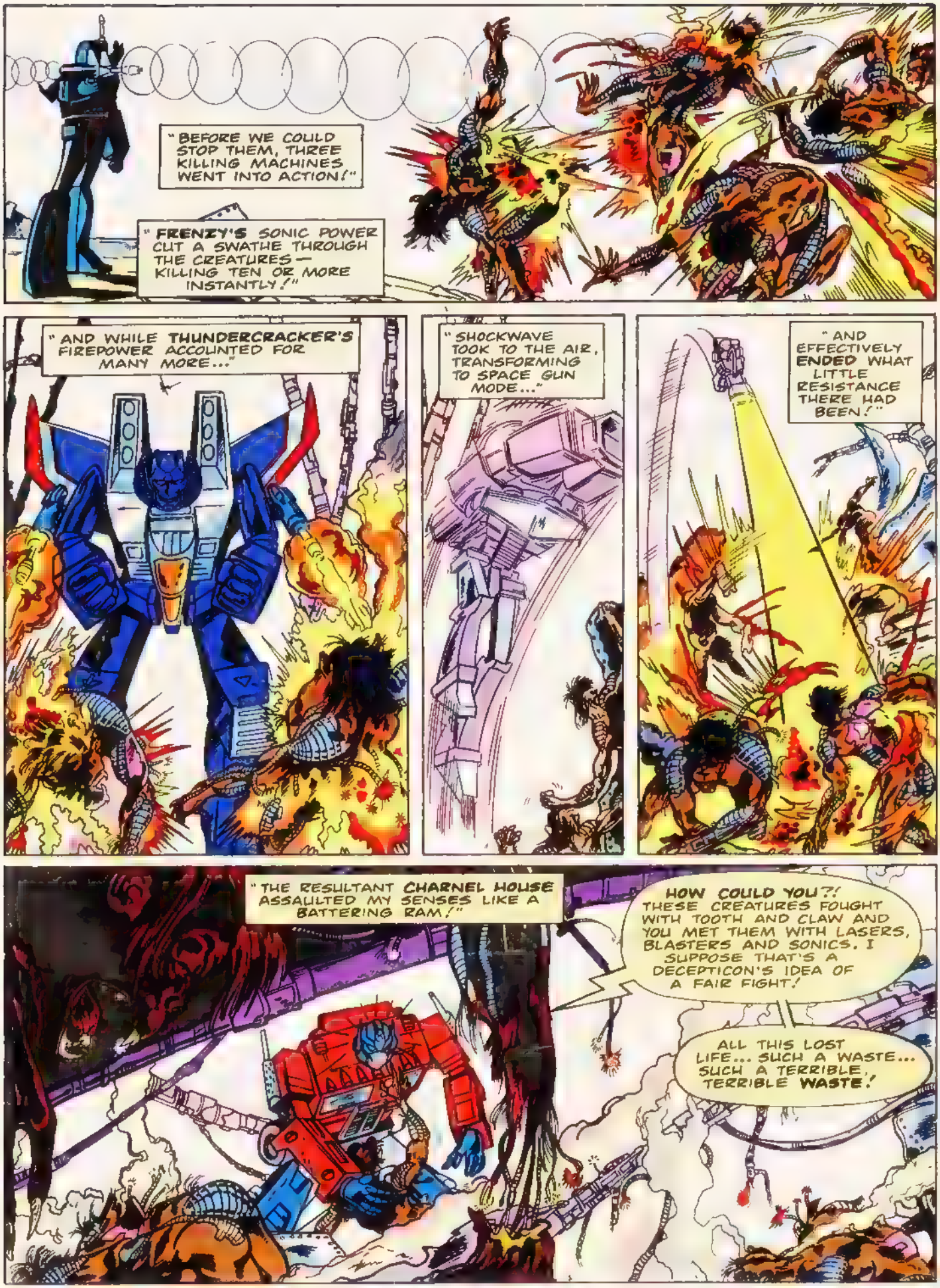
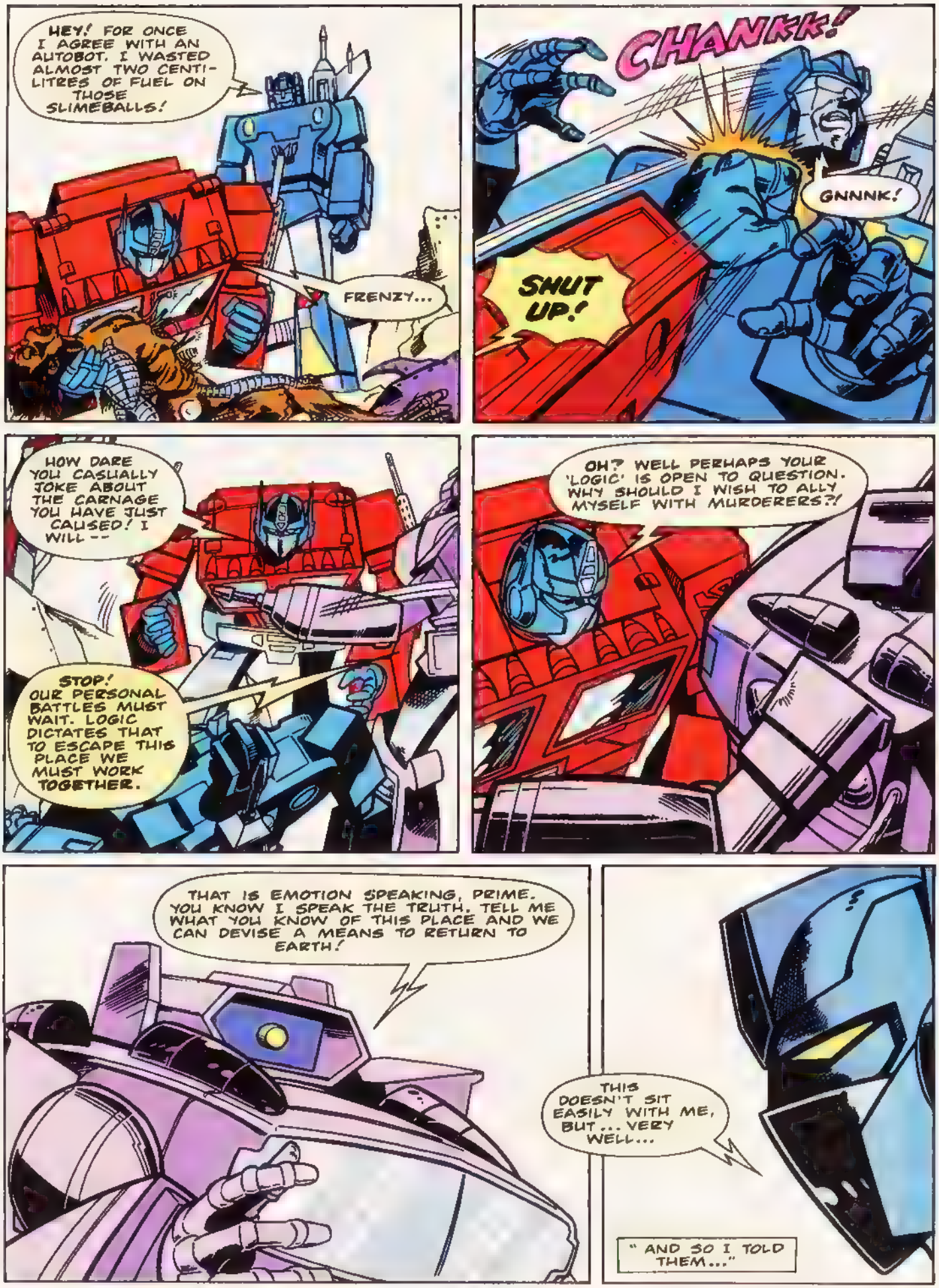
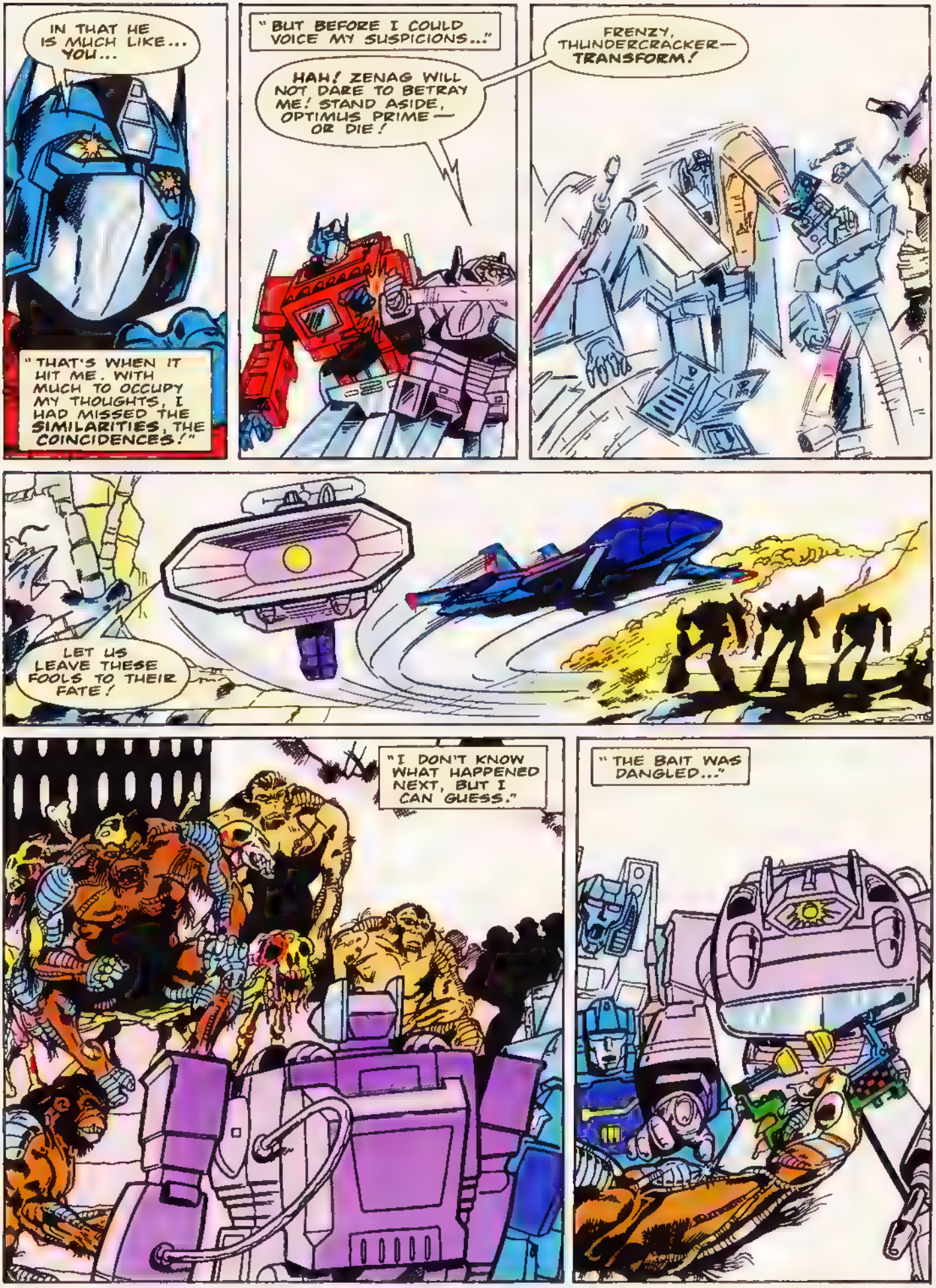
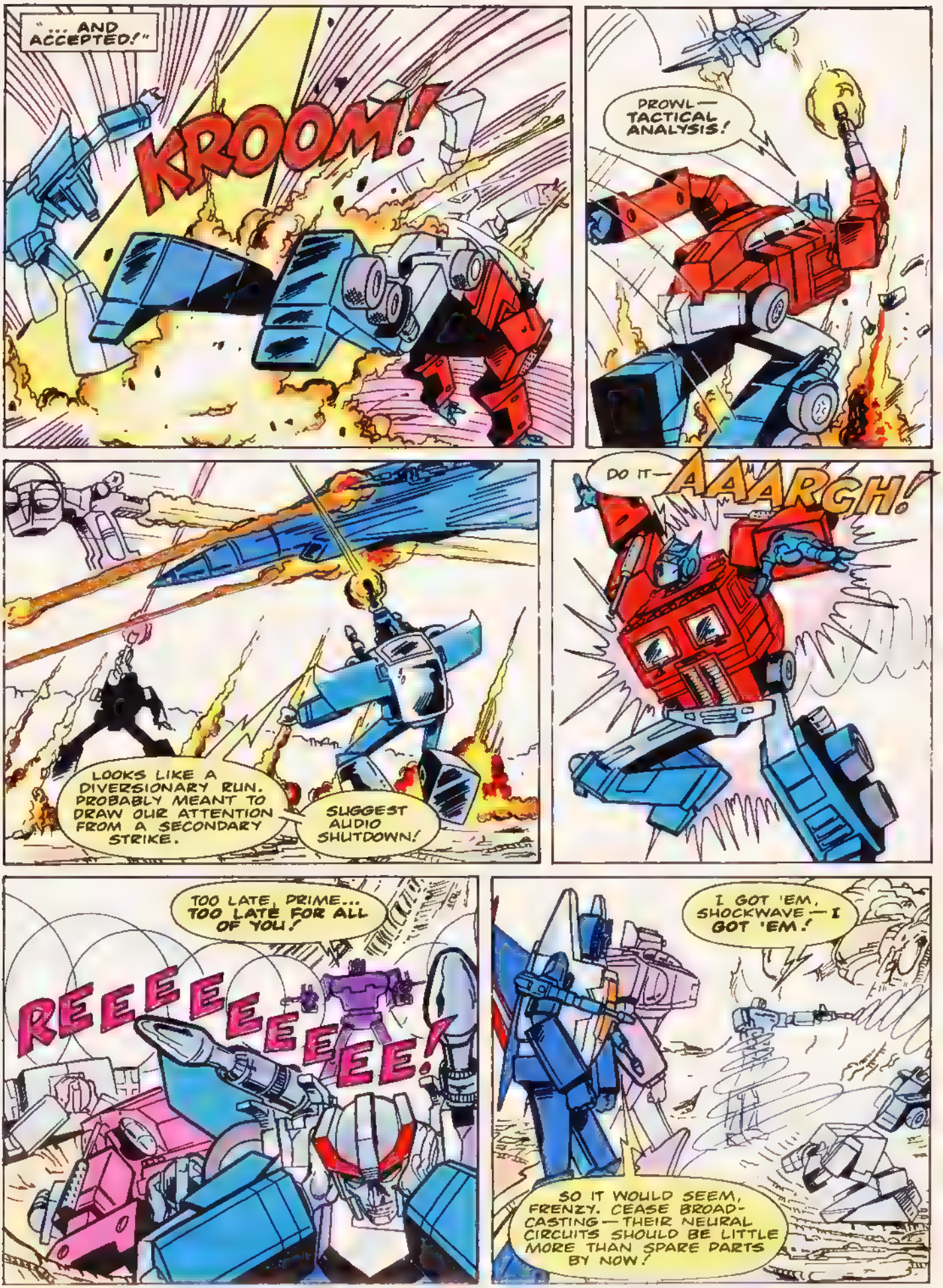
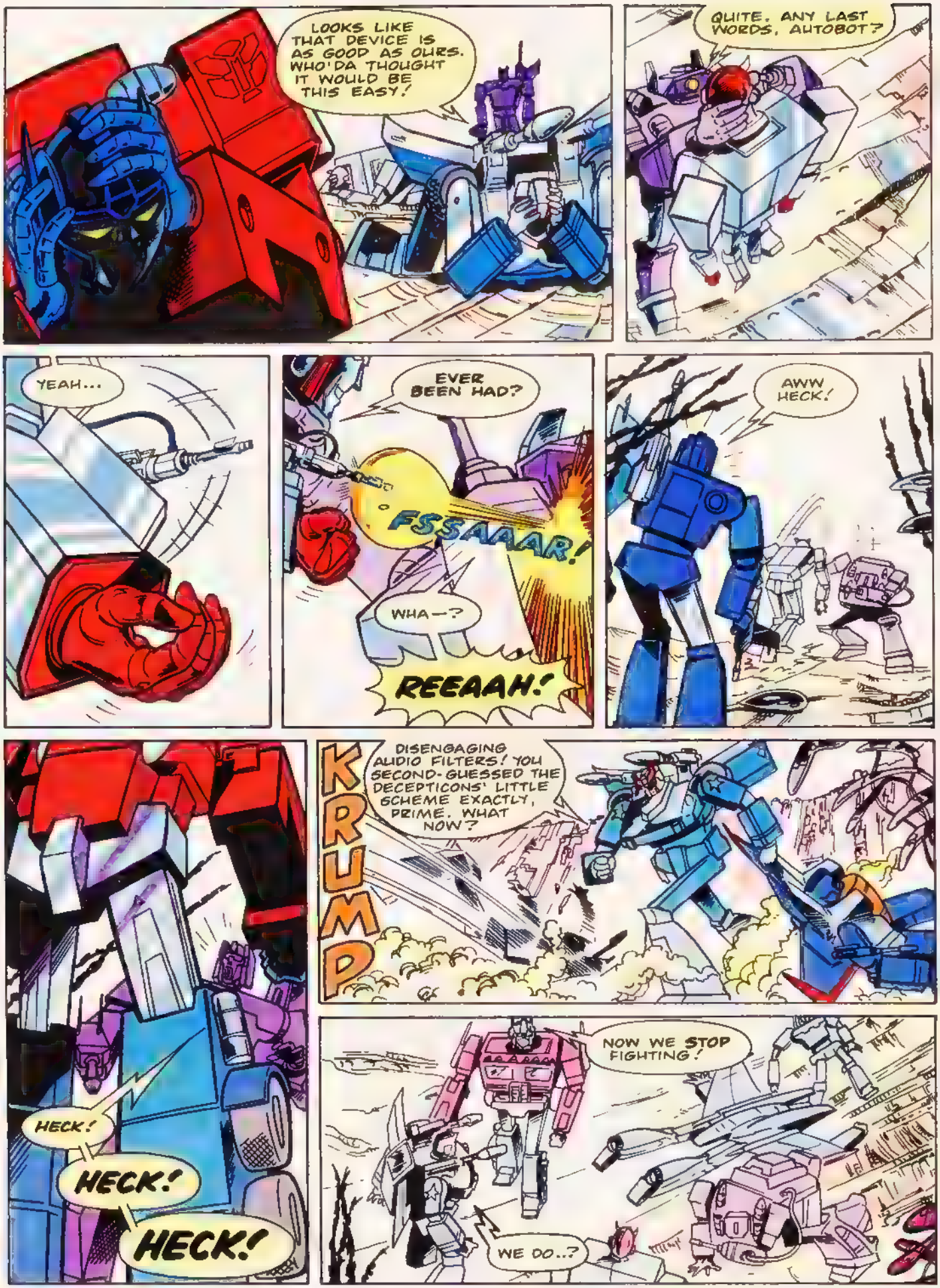

"BEFORE WE COULD STOP THEM, THREE KILLING MACHINES WENT INTO ACTION!"
"FRENZY'S SONIC POWER CUT A SWATHE THROUGH THE CREATURES — KILLING TEN OR MORE INSTANTLY!"
"AND WHILE THUNDERCRACKER'S FIREPOWER ACCOUNTED FOR MANY MORE..."
"SHOCKWAVE TOOK TO THE AIR, TRANSFORMING TO SPACE GUN MODE..."
"AND EFFECTIVELY ENDED WHAT LITTLE RESISTANCE THERE HAD BEEN!"
"THE RESULTANT CHARNEL HOUSE ASSAULTED MY SENSES LIKE A BATTERING RAM!"
HOW COULD YOU?! THESE CREATURES FOUGHT WITH TOOTH AND CLAW AND YOU MET THEM WITH LASERS, BLASTERS AND SONICS. I SUPPOSE THAT'S A DECEPTICON'S IDEA OF A FAIR FIGHT!
ALL THIS LOST LIFE... SUCH A WASTE... SUCH A TERRIBLE, TERRIBLE WASTE!

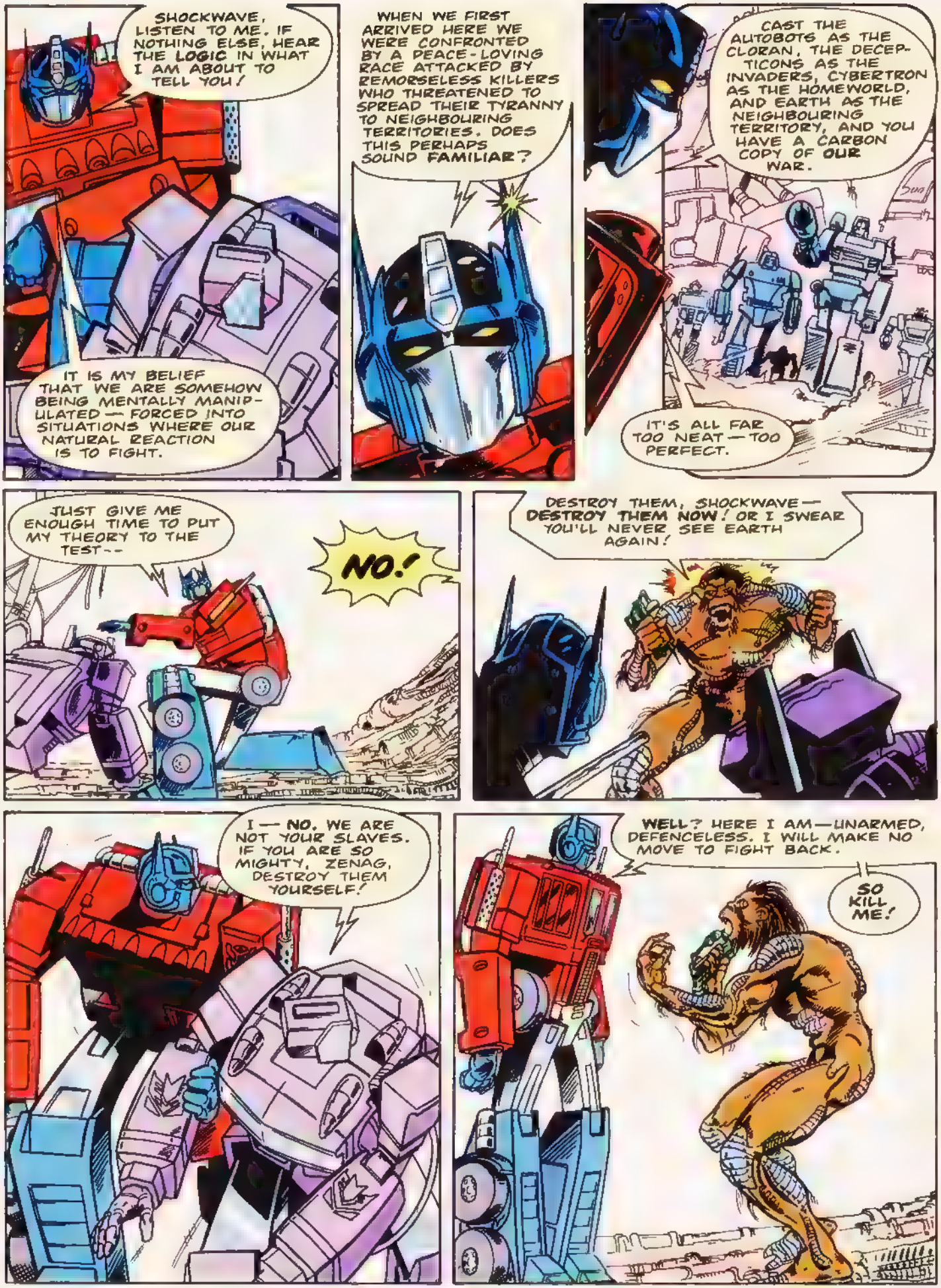

HEY! FOR ONCE I AGREE WITH AN AUTOBOT. I WASTED ALMOST TWO CENTI-LITRES OF FUEL ON THOSE SLIMEBALLS!
FRENZY...
CHANKK!
GNNNK!
SHUT UP!
HOW DARE YOU CASUALLY JOKE ABOUT THE CARNAGE YOU HAVE JUST CAUSED! I WILL --
STOP! OUR PERSONAL BATTLES MUST WAIT. LOGIC DICTATES THAT TO ESCAPE THIS PLACE WE MUST WORK TOGETHER.
OH? WELL PERHAPS YOUR 'LOGIC' IS OPEN TO QUESTION. WHY SHOULD I WISH TO ALLY MYSELF WITH MURDERERS?!
THAT IS EMOTION SPEAKING, PRIME. YOU KNOW I SPEAK THE TRUTH. TELL ME WHAT YOU KNOW OF THIS PLACE AND WE CAN DEVISE A MEANS TO RETURN TO EARTH!
THIS DOESN'T SIT EASILY WITH ME, BUT... VERY WELL...
" AND SO I TOLD THEM..."

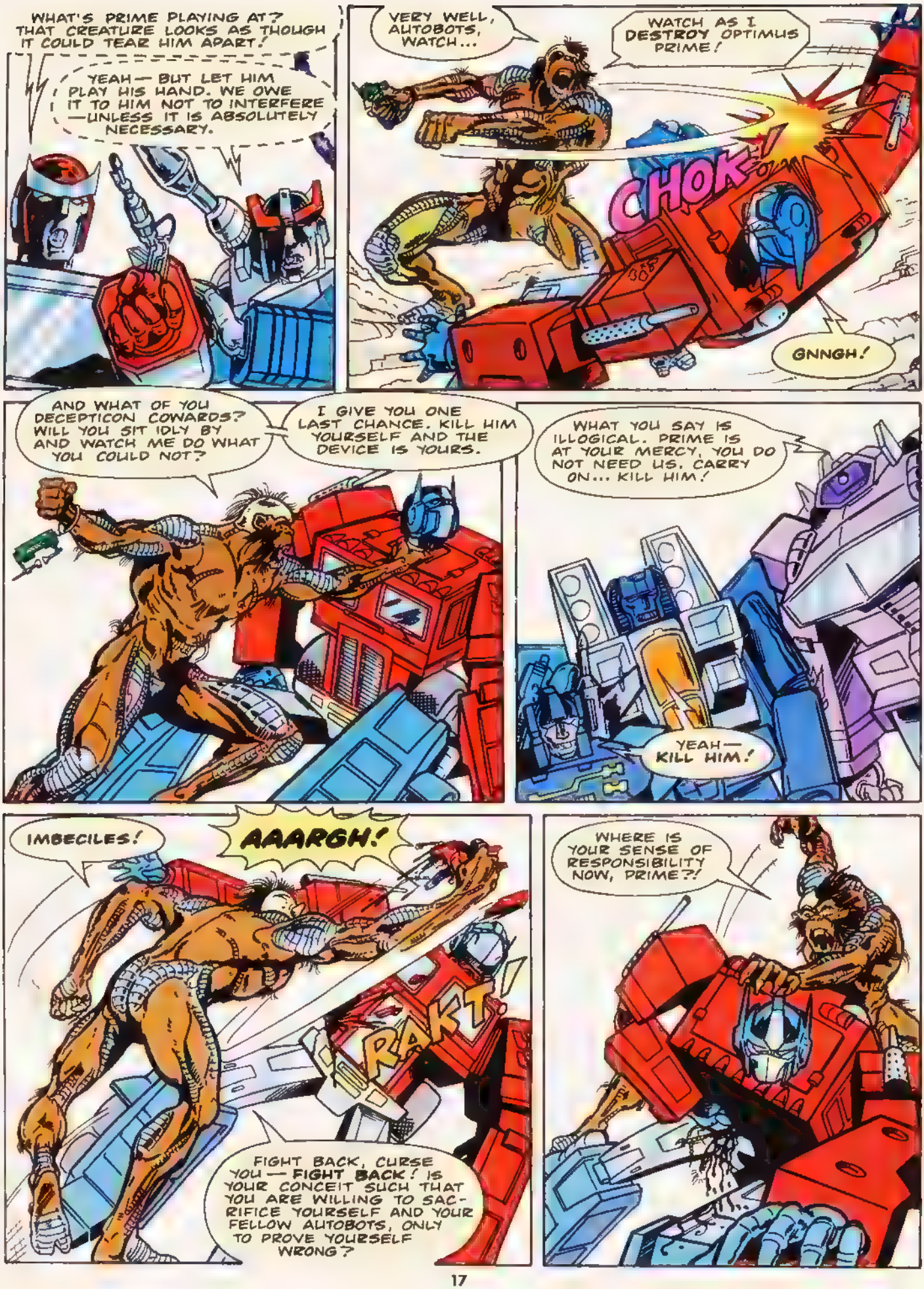
"...OF THE CLORAN — A PEACEFUL RACE DRIVEN FROM THEIR HOME BY INVADERS BENT ONLY ON CONQUEST AND DESTRUCTION."
"...OF OUR ARRIVAL IN THEIR WORLD AND THE SUBSEQUENT MEETING WITH THE SURVIVORS."
"...OF HOW THEY BEGGED US FOR AID, AND HOW— ULTIMATELY — WE COULD NOT REFUSE THEM."
"...OF HOW WE HALTED THE INVADERS' MARCH INTO NEIGHBOURING TERRITORIES, THEREBY INCURRING THE WRATH OF THEIR LEADER — ZENAG!"
"...OF ZENAG'S SUB-SEQUENT OFFER. ALLOW HIS ARMY TO CONTINUE UNHINDERED, AND THE DEVICE THAT COULD RETURN US TO EARTH WOULD BE OURS."
AND OF COURSE YOU REFUSED! HOW PATHETICALLY PREDICTABLE.
WE OWE THESE CREATURES NOTHING! IF YOU WILL NOT DEAL WITH THIS ZENAG, I WILL!
NO!
WHAT?!
IT IS NOT JUST A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY THAT PREVENTS ME DEALING WITH ZENAG. HE IS EVIL, DECEITFUL! HE CANNOT BE TRUSTED!

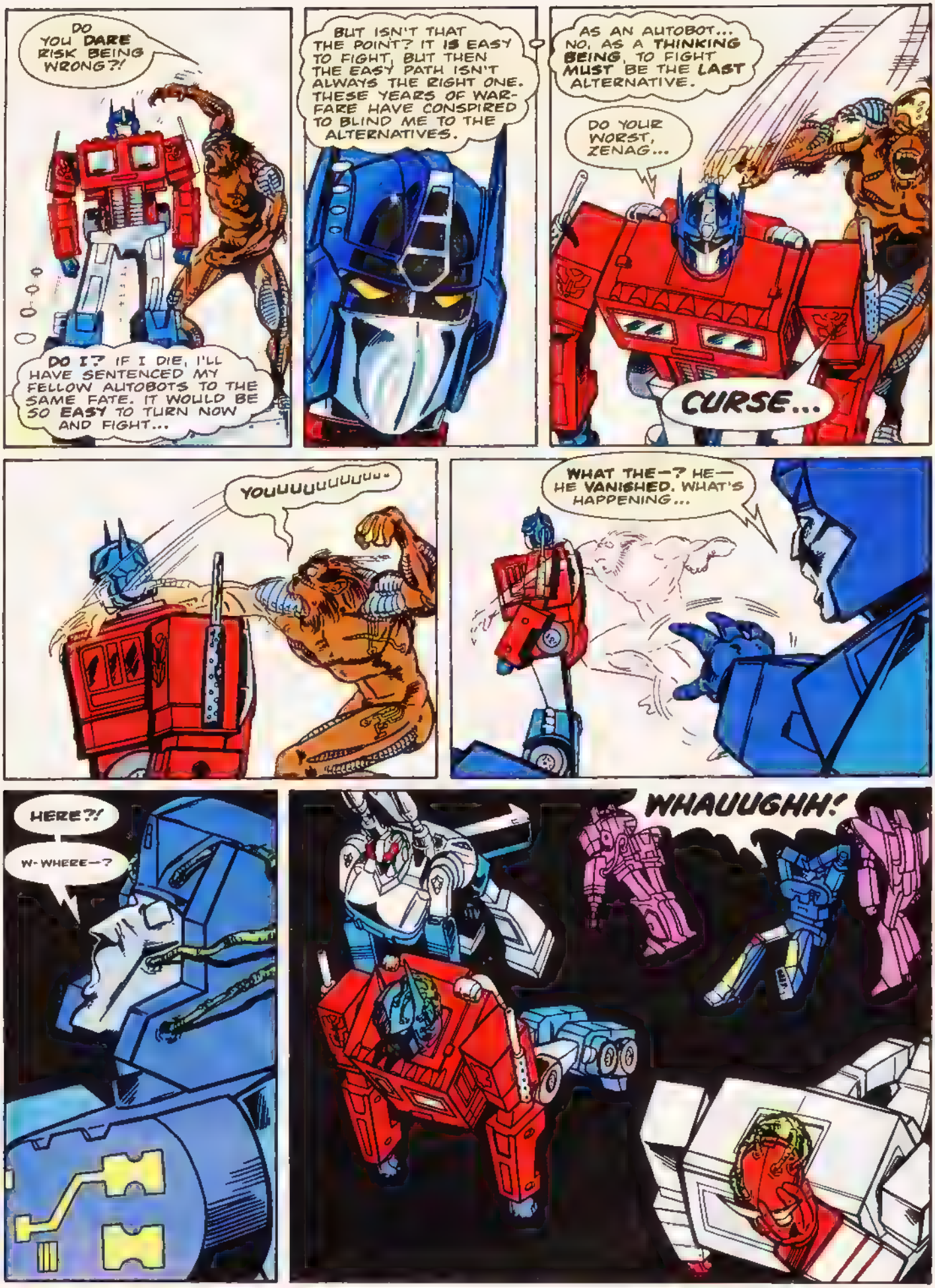

IN THAT HE IS MUCH LIKE... YOU...
"THAT'S WHEN IT HIT ME. WITH MUCH TO OCCUPY MY THOUGHTS, I HAD MISSED THE SIMILARITIES, THE COINCIDENCES!"
"BUT BEFORE I COULD VOICE MY SUSPICIONS..."
HAH! ZENAG WILL NOT DARE TO BETRAY ME! STAND ASIDE, OPTIMUS PRIME — OR DIE!
FRENZY, THUNDERCRACKER— TRANSFORM!
LET US LEAVE THESE FOOLS TO THEIR FATE!
"I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED NEXT, BUT I CAN GUESS."
"THE BAIT WAS DANGLED..."

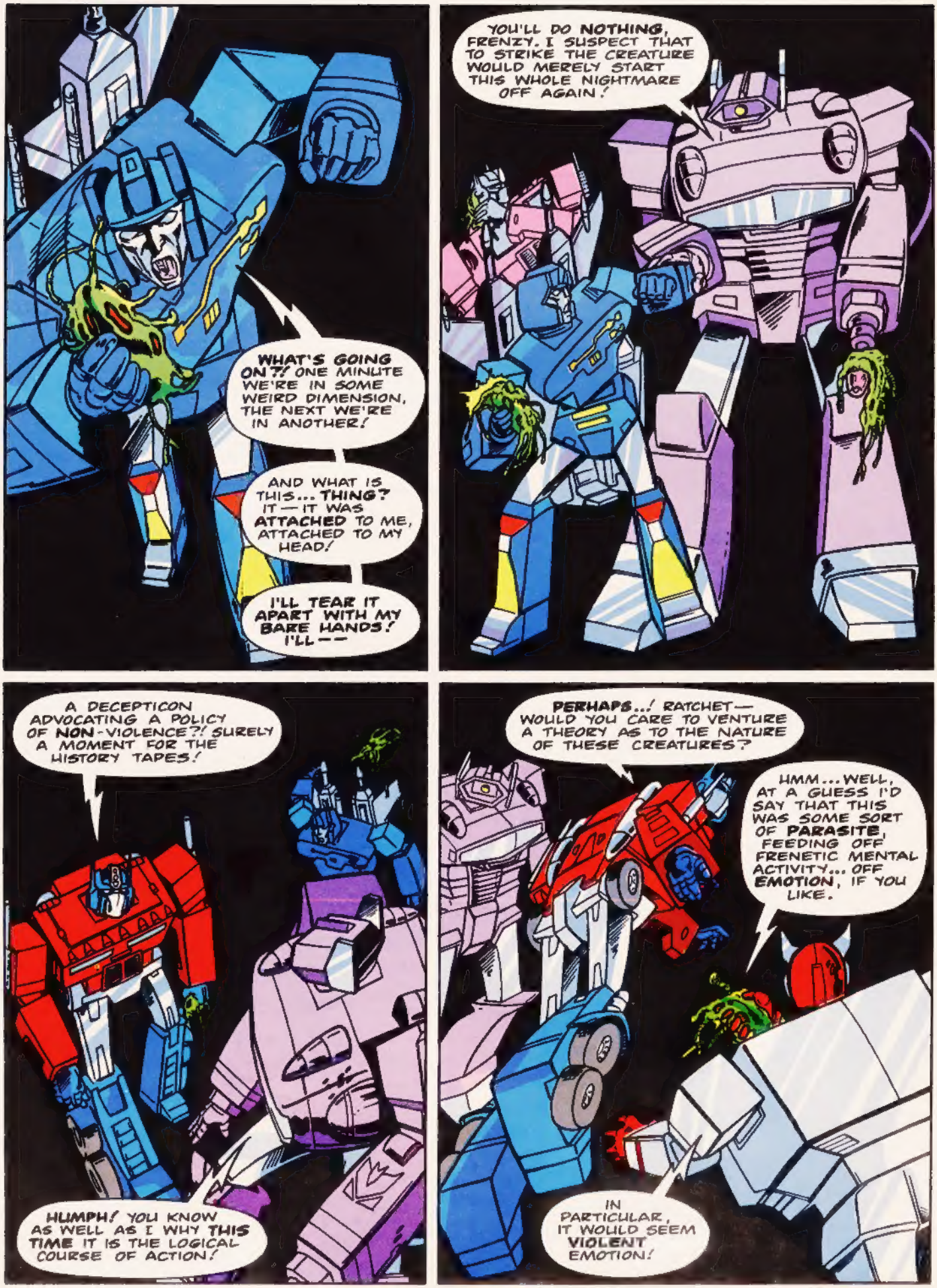

"... AND ACCEPTED!"
KROOM!
PROWL— TACTICAL ANALYSIS!
LOOKS LIKE A DIVERSIONARY RUN. PROBABLY MEANT TO DRAW OUR ATTENTION FROM A SECONDARY STRIKE.
SUGGEST AUDIO SHUTDOWN!
DO IT— AAARGH!
TOO LATE, PRIME... TOO LATE FOR ALL OF YOU!
REEEEEEEEEE!
I GOT 'EM, SHOCKWAVE— I GOT 'EM!
SO IT WOULD SEEM, FRENZY. CEASE BROADCASTING— THEIR NEURAL CIRCUITS SHOULD BE LITTLE MORE THAN SPARE PARTS BY NOW!


LOOKS LIKE THAT DEVICE IS AS GOOD AS OURS. WHO'DA THOUGHT IT WOULD BE THIS EASY!
QUITE. ANY LAST WORDS, AUTOBOT?
YEAH...
EVER BEEN HAD?
FSSAAAR!
WHA—?
REEAAH!
AWW HECK!
HECK!
HECK!
HECK!
KRUMP
DISENGAGING AUDIO FILTERS! YOU SECOND-GUESSED THE DECEPTICONS' LITTLE SCHEME EXACTLY, PRIME. WHAT NOW?
NOW WE STOP FIGHTING!
WE DO..?

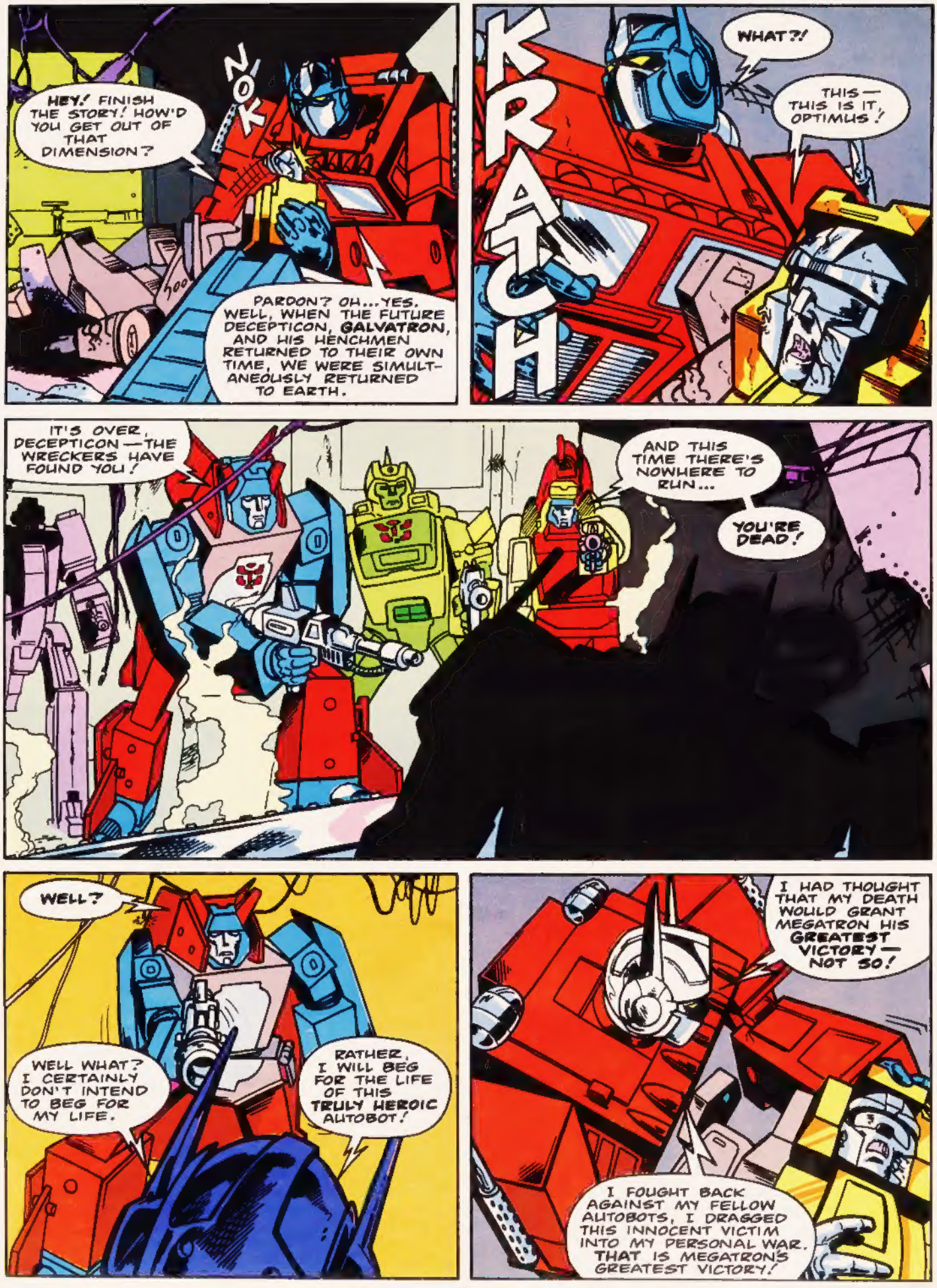

SHOCKWAVE, LISTEN TO ME. IF NOTHING ELSE, HEAR THE LOGIC IN WHAT I AM ABOUT TO TELL YOU!
IT IS MY BELIEF THAT WE ARE SOMEHOW BEING MENTALLY MANIPULATED — FORCED INTO SITUATIONS WHERE OUR NATURAL REACTION IS TO FIGHT.
WHEN WE FIRST ARRIVED HERE WE WERE CONFRONTED BY A PEACE-LOVING RACE ATTACKED BY REMORSELESS KILLERS WHO THREATENED TO SPREAD THEIR TYRANNY TO NEIGHBOURING TERRITORIES. DOES THIS PERHAPS SOUND FAMILIAR?
CAST THE AUTOBOTS AS THE CLORAN, THE DECEPTICONS AS THE INVADERS, CYBERTRON AS THE HOMEWORLD, AND EARTH AS THE NEIGHBOURING TERRITORY, AND YOU HAVE A CARBON COPY OF OUR WAR.
IT'S ALL FAR TOO NEAT — TOO PERFECT.
JUST GIVE ME ENOUGH TIME TO PUT MY THEORY TO THE TEST--
NO.!
DESTROY THEM, SHOCKWAVE — DESTROY THEM NOW! OR I SWEAR YOU'LL NEVER SEE EARTH AGAIN!
I — NO. WE ARE NOT YOUR SLAVES. IF YOU ARE SO MIGHTY, ZENAG, DESTROY THEM YOURSELF!
WELL? HERE I AM — UNARMED, DEFENCELESS. I WILL MAKE NO MOVE TO FIGHT BACK.
SO KILL ME!


WHAT'S PRIME PLAYING AT? THAT CREATURE LOOKS AS THOUGH IT COULD TEAR HIM APART!
YEAH— BUT LET HIM PLAY HIS HAND. WE OWE IT TO HIM NOT TO INTERFERE —UNLESS IT IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY.
VERY WELL, AUTOBOTS, WATCH...
WATCH AS I DESTROY OPTIMUS PRIME!
CHOK!
GNNGH!
AND WHAT OF YOU DECEPTICON COWARDS? WILL YOU SIT IDLY BY AND WATCH ME DO WHAT YOU COULD NOT?
I GIVE YOU ONE LAST CHANCE. KILL HIM YOURSELF AND THE DEVICE IS YOURS.
WHAT YOU SAY IS ILLOGICAL. PRIME IS AT YOUR MERCY, YOU DO NOT NEED US. CARRY ON... KILL HIM!
YEAH— KILL HIM!
IMBECILES!
AAARGH!
RAKT!
FIGHT BACK, CURSE YOU— FIGHT BACK! IS YOUR CONCEIT SUCH THAT YOU ARE WILLING TO SACRIFICE YOURSELF AND YOUR FELLOW AUTOBOTS, ONLY TO PROVE YOURSELF WRONG?
WHERE IS YOUR SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY NOW, PRIME?!


DO YOU DARE RISK BEING WRONG?!
DO I? IF I DIE, I'LL HAVE SENTENCED MY FELLOW AUTOBOTS TO THE SAME FATE. IT WOULD BE SO EASY TO TURN NOW AND FIGHT...
BUT ISN'T THAT THE POINT? IT IS EASY TO FIGHT, BUT THEN THE EASY PATH ISN'T ALWAYS THE RIGHT ONE. THESE YEARS OF WARFARE HAVE CONSPIRED TO BLIND ME TO THE ALTERNATIVES.
AS AN AUTOBOT... NO, AS A THINKING BEING, TO FIGHT MUST BE THE LAST ALTERNATIVE.
DO YOUR WORST, ZENAG...
CURSE...
YOUUUUUUUUUU-
WHAT THE—? HE— HE VANISHED. WHAT'S HAPPENING...
HERE?!
W-WHERE—?
WHAUUGHH!


WHAT'S GOING ON?! ONE MINUTE WE'RE IN SOME WEIRD DIMENSION, THE NEXT WE'RE IN ANOTHER!
AND WHAT IS THIS... THING? IT — IT WAS ATTACHED TO ME, ATTACHED TO MY HEAD!
I'LL TEAR IT APART WITH MY BARE HANDS! I'LL — —
YOU'LL DO NOTHING, FRENZY. I SUSPECT THAT TO STRIKE THE CREATURE WOULD MERELY START THIS WHOLE NIGHTMARE OFF AGAIN!
A DECEPTICON ADVOCATING A POLICY OF NON-VIOLENCE?! SURELY A MOMENT FOR THE HISTORY TAPES!
HUMPH! YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I WHY THIS TIME IT IS THE LOGICAL COURSE OF ACTION!
PERHAPS...! RATCHET— WOULD YOU CARE TO VENTURE A THEORY AS TO THE NATURE OF THESE CREATURES?
HMM... WELL, AT A GUESS I'D SAY THAT THIS WAS SOME SORT OF PARASITE, FEEDING OFF FRENETIC MENTAL ACTIVITY... OFF EMOTION, IF YOU LIKE.
IN PARTICULAR, IT WOULD SEEM VIOLENT EMOTION!

"RATCHET WENT ON TO HYPOTHESISE ON THE CREATURES' ORIGIN AND HOW THEY FASHIONED AN ILLUSION IN EACH MIND, TAILOR-MADE TO PROVOKE THE OPTIMUM VIOLENT REACTION."
"WHEN HE COMPARED THEIR LOVE OF VIOLENCE TO A DECEPTICON PHILOSOPHY, SHOCKWAVE, THUNDERCRACKER AND FRENZY SAW FIT TO DEPART!"
"BUT SOMETHING RATCHET HADN'T REALISED, WAS WHAT FOLLOWED ON LOGICALLY FROM HIS THEORY..."
PRIME? ARE YOU ALRIGHT?
THANKFULLY, YES. THOUGH I AGREE WITH ALL YOU HAVE SAID, I THINK THERE'S MORE. I BELIEVE THAT THE CREATURES—GIVEN ENOUGH TIME AND ENOUGH VIOLENT EMOTION—COULD HAVE FASHIONED A REALITY FROM ILLUSION.
Y-YOUR SIDE! YOU MEAN--
YES—WE WERE THIS CLOSE!
WOW! YOU MEAN IF YOU'D LEFT IT JUST A LITTLE LONGER BEFORE YOU STOPPED FIGHTING, ZENAG COULD HAVE KILLED YOU?
INDEED.
I--
HMM. WHAT BEGAN AS A STORY TOLD TO REVIVE FLAGGING SPIRITS HAS PERHAPS SHOWN ME THE COURSE OF ACTION I MUST TAKE IF WE ARE TO SURVIVE!


HEY! FINISH THE STORY! HOW'D YOU GET OUT OF THAT DIMENSION?
NOK
PARDON? OH...YES. WELL, WHEN THE FUTURE DECEPTICON, GALVATRON, AND HIS HENCHMEN RETURNED TO THEIR OWN TIME, WE WERE SIMULTANEOUSLY RETURNED TO EARTH.
KRACH
WHAT?!
THIS — THIS IS IT, OPTIMUS!
IT'S OVER, DECEPTICON — THE WRECKERS HAVE FOUND YOU!
AND THIS TIME THERE'S NOWHERE TO RUN...
YOU'RE DEAD!
WELL?
WELL WHAT? I CERTAINLY DON'T INTEND TO BEG FOR MY LIFE.
RATHER, I WILL BEG FOR THE LIFE OF THIS TRULY HEROIC AUTOBOT!
I HAD THOUGHT THAT MY DEATH WOULD GRANT MEGATRON HIS GREATEST VICTORY — NOT SO!
I FOUGHT BACK AGAINST MY FELLOW AUTOBOTS, I DRAGGED THIS INNOCENT VICTIM INTO MY PERSONAL WAR. THAT IS MEGATRON'S GREATEST VICTORY!

I ALMOST MISSED THE WISDOM OF MY OWN WORDS WHEN I TOLD OUTBACK THAT TO FIGHT SHOULD BE THE LAST RESORT. I WILL FIGHT YOU NO LONGER, WRECKERS. ALL I ASK IS THAT YOU SPARE OUTBACK.
IF, AS A RESULT OF MY DEATH, JUST ONE AUTOBOT LIFE IS SAVED, THEN IT WILL NOT HAVE BEEN WITHOUT MEANING AND THE REAL VICTORY WILL BE MINE!
I UNDERSTAND NOW...
WHO?!
YOU WERE RIGHT TO SUMMON ME, ULTRA MAGNUS. VOICING YOUR SUSPICIONS MAY JUST PROVE TO BE THE SAVING GRACE OF US ALL.
EMIRATE XAARON! YOU LIVE! PRAISE THE MATRIX!
I HAVE LISTENED CAREFULLY TO YOUR LITTLE SPEECH 'DECEPTICON', AND I HAVE JUST ONE THING TO SAY...
OPTIMUS— WELCOME HOME, MY FRIEND!
NEXT: FALLEN ANGEL!